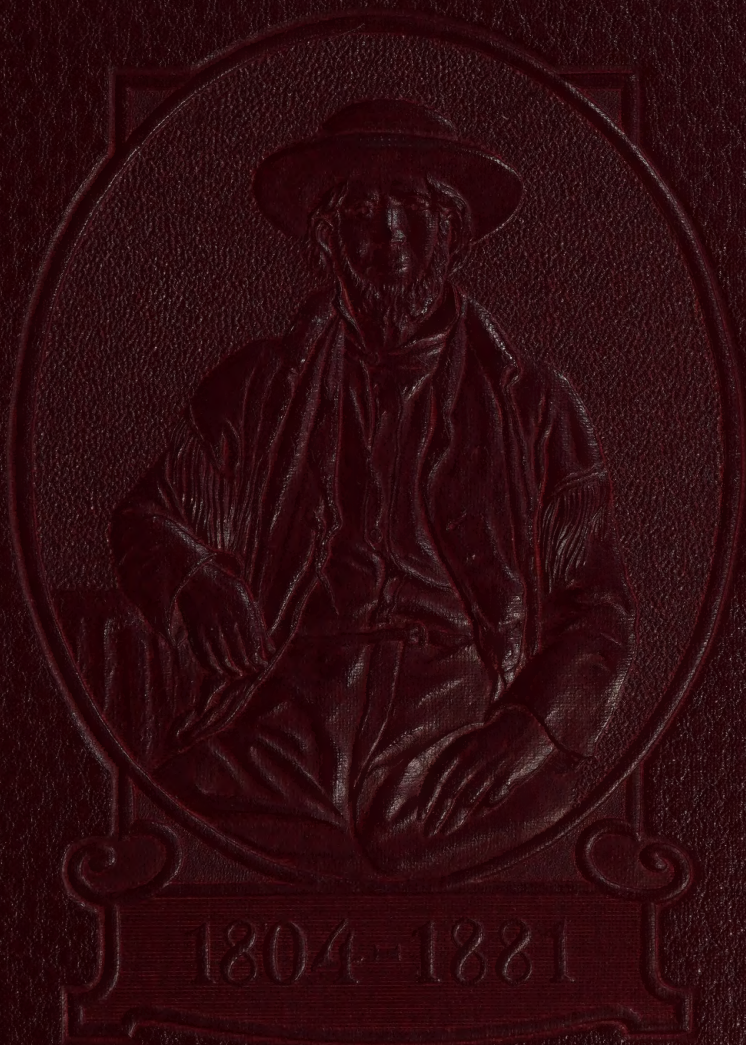


JAMES BRIDGER

By J. CECIL ALTER



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JAMES BRIDGER

A Historical Narrative

JAMES BRIDGER

A MEMOIR



JAMES BRIDGER
(About 1866.)

JAMES BRIDGER

TRAPPER, FRONTIERSMAN, SCOUT AND GUIDE

A Historical Narrative

(Illustrated)

By

J. CECIL ALTER



With which is incorporated a verbatim copy, annotated

of

JAMES BRIDGER

A Biographical Sketch

(Illustrated)

By

MAJ. GEN. GRENVILLE M. DODGE



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P R E F A C E

IN his natural lifetime James Bridger was a resident of the West at large; with but two or three definite domiciles that he ever called home. So in the annals of western Americana the old scout and mountaineer dwells in comparative obscurity in widely scattered and unrelated references. Only three or four biographical outlines have been constructed in which he may abide somewhat inadequately, in publications devoted largely to other subjects.

The aim herein has been accurately to rebuild in permanent form the principal one of these biographical sketches, that by General Grenville M. Dodge, being the only one that has appeared separately, and which has long been unavailable and out of print; and to support and surround it with a superstructure of facts gathered from every known source. Thus it may be that the future renown of this modest but most capable of early western characters will be a little more nearly commensurate with his importance in the history of the old West.

He has already dwelt too long in the frontier cabins of books-out-of-print; in the tepees of tangled traditions; and in the open air of the fading memories of friends; and his character and activities have thus been exposed to the hoodlumism of disregard and misrepresentation. In this present work it is hoped that the old scout may find a certain sanctuary from the unjust designations of braggart, drunkard, polygamist or prevaricator; though it is further hoped that he will not be shielded from any just and proper characterization howsoever base.

At best, any structure that may be erected now must be quite inadequate to shelter all his acts; for only those experiences may be gathered into the biographical composition that have been most definitely focused in the records and human memories consulted, covering the fifty-odd years of his uncharted ramblings. Unlike many conspicuous westerners he wrote no letters and kept no

journal; and he neither exploited himself nor encouraged others seriously to do so; hence the paucity of original material.

Most of the authors cited have long ago joined Bridger in Elysium, and their works have been out of print and difficult of access for many years; while those still living who knew him when they were youths, can see but a faded picture of the famous old frontiersman. A goodly amount of material has been obtained, and many chimerical events substantiated and dates established through the files in the government archives.

Valuable material and an improved viewpoint have been acquired while following a few of Bridger's own trails along the beaver-bearing streams and onto the Rocky Mountain summits. This journeying, just out of sight a brief generation behind the old scout, has also afforded an occasional contact with some of his junior contemporaries, who have aided somewhat in making random facts fit better into place.

No attempt has been made to interpolate the features for any of the missing years in the life of the subject. A few breaks are essential, possibly, the better to indicate his proneness, literally and deliberately, to lose himself from his comrades and the outside world for long periods of time. Some of the structural outlines herein have thus been presented by voids in silhouette, in the hope that some one may bring out details by turning on the further light of truth.

The source of each stick of timber utilized in this biographical edifice has been indicated by references in the text to the accompanying bibliography of Bridgerana. The best biographies of Bridger have been prepared by General Grenville M. Dodge (1), Dr. Grace Raymond Hebard and E. A. Brininstool, Captain J. Lee Humfreville, and Captain Hiram M. Chittenden. My indebtedness extends also, however, to Mrs. Frances F. Victor, Captain W. F. Raynolds, Nathaniel P. Langford, C. G. Coutant, Harrison C. Dale, Edwin L. Sabin, T. C. Elliott, Colonel Henry B. Carrington, Mrs. Frances C. Carrington, Mrs. Virginia Bridger Hahn, The Librarian of Congress,

Oregon Historical Society, Montana Historical Society, Wyoming Historical Department, Nebraska Historical Society, Missouri Historical Society, Latter Day Saints Church Historian and Librarian, Public Librarian, New York City, and Public Librarian, Salt Lake City, as well as to every other authority cited herein. A series of Bridger *Travelogs* in *The Salt Lake Tribune* formed the nucleus of this biographical summary, and brought many requests for its publication.

J. CECIL ALTER.

Salt Lake City, Utah.
October, 1924.

FOREWORD

IT seems peculiarly appropriate that James Bridger, who became the West's foremost frontiersman, should have been born just as Captains Lewis and Clark were embarking on the exploring expedition which gave historical birth to the trans-Mississippi West in 1804. It also appears befitting that the Bridger family should have emigrated to the primitive town of St. Louis in 1812 at the time the territory of Missouri was organized out of the Louisiana Purchase area; and that young Bridger should have been launched into training for a career of self-dependence in 1817 just as the territory launched its campaign for statehood.

Missouri attained its majority after a four years' probation, while Bridger's apprenticeship lasted five years. Thus in 1822, at the age of eighteen, he went forth on his first journey to the sources of the Missouri River literally to grow up contemporaneously with the new country.

Moving forward in intimate contact with each transitional phase of the country's development, Bridger early attained and long maintained a superior position in its history. He took to the Rocky Mountain wilderness like one born to it, and soon became one of the West's most skillful single-handed hunters and beaver trappers. However, he was among the first to leave the lonesome trail and to take the leadership of a trapper's brigade; and subsequently to accept the responsibilities of proprietorship of a major fur-trapping and trading enterprise, as the fur trade of the country underwent its kaleidoscopic changes.

Accurately sensing the next great phase in the evolution of the trans-Mississippi West, Bridger was among the earliest to relinquish the traps and fur packs permanently, and to establish a frontier trading post and repair station to meet the needs of the oncoming emigrant hosts. This he did with unerring aim as to location, and as to oppor-

tuneness of time, Fort Bridger becoming a conspicuous landmark for both traders and travelers through many decades.

Utilizing his most extensive knowledge of the West, and his valuable acquaintance and prestige with the Indians, Bridger added to his activities the business of guiding and assisting emigrants across the mountains. His native observational sense was as keen as that of the shrewdest Indian scout; and he had an unfailing memory for places and routes. Thus his indefatigable journeyings into practically every valley and onto nearly every summit in the entire West, during his hunting and trapping days, equipped him for superior service during the west country's next and most serious phase of expansion, namely, its long and bitter conflict with the Indians.

Bridger's service as scout and adviser for numerous United States Army officers was well nigh indispensable. When guiding a peaceful party across a river-hemmed or mountain-blocked country his word of advice became the law of the expedition, and very often its salvation; and his decisions, and often his mere opinions, when accompanying troops into a region infested with hostile Indians, were virtually the orders of a commanding officer, because of his unerring knowledge of the country, and of its wily inhabitants.

But when the industrial wheel of fortune spread its spokes of heavy steel along the principal western thoroughfares, Bridger was carried forward and downward in its irresistible revolution. Passing the apex of his usefulness and efficiency due to advancing years, to the permanency of the increasing white population needing no frontiersman's service, and to the need for younger men as army guides and scouts, his career seems to have rolled up suddenly like a scroll.

He had been foremost among frontiersmen in guiding settlers into the choicest mining and agricultural valleys; and in aiding the location and construction engineers of the first railroad lines across the mountains. Thus he had sensed with precision the coming of this last major

phase of the country's development as he was to be permitted to witness it through dimming eyes.

But, though he clung long and pathetically to the wheel of progress on its descending turn as one who had learned to love the West more intimately and more intensively than any other adopted son, he was finally lifted off by friendly hands and carried back across the plains on the lower shores of the Missouri River, near to the place of his beginnings for final ministrations and permanent rest.

CHAPTER I

BRIDGER'S BEGINNINGS

A MORMON elder, voicing a tradition, once stated in my hearing that James Bridger, described as a famous western trapper and scout, had told the Mormon pioneers they could not prosper in the Salt Lake valley. The trail-breaking story of the Mormons had been narrated interestingly; and the mention of a much traveled mountaineer, whose judgment was presumably arrayed against the heaven guided Saints, was a climax of adventure. Thus the reference served to open a storage compartment in my mind and in my reference files for Bridger, famous or infamous as might develop.

Before coming West I had been served almost to satiety with "Buffalo Bill," capable and lovable and self-made famous; and I had followed the career of "Kit" Carson, who soared into fame on the tail of Colonel John C. Fremont's elaborate publicity kite. But later I had learned through a veteran plainsman that James Bridger, an older and more capable mountaineer than Carson, had been instrumental in securing for his protégé, trapper Carson, the place as guide on the Fremont expeditions (1842-1846). And I was to learn that Bridger equaled or excelled the versatile Colonel Cody in every art but that of personal exploitation, and that he had flourished almost a generation previous to the caparisoned showman, when the West was really young.

Thus for me the Bridger quest was quickened as if it had been the ascent of a new found trail leading to an unscaled peak. The tourist entertaining elder in Salt Lake City had introduced me to Bridger about middle life; and reminiscent Mormons and other emigrants of pre-railroad days, and Indian war veterans of a later era, obligingly extended the Bridger narrative here and there like a tattered strip from Joseph's coat. But it was necessary to back-track to Bridger's beginnings, and carefully

seek out the evidences of his entire trail afresh, before that first crossing of the Mormon and Bridger paths was seen in proper perspective, and the picturesque mountaineer stood revealed.

The few known facts of James Bridger's boyhood have been rescued from oblivion by General Dodge (1) (see bibliography) and Captain Chittenden (2). According to these authorities he was born at Richmond, Va., March 17, 1804, in a family with two other children, a boy and a girl. His parents, James and Chloe Bridger, were fairly well established as proprietors of a tavern and a farm, the father also doing some surveying.

But the family was caught up on the tide of emigration in 1812 and deposited on a farm near St. Louis. Here the father found much employment at his special occupation in that new and unsurveyed region, while the mother, bearing the burdens of the growing children, also assumed charge of the farm. However, after four strenuous years of pioneering in those primitive conditions, the mother passed away, and her sister-in-law, the senior Bridger's sister, came to assume the mother's responsibilities.

The second son soon followed his mother; and in the following autumn, of 1817, the father also passed away, leaving some important problems for solution by the maiden aunt and foster mother.¹

James Bridger, Jr., then a lad just under fourteen, had gained some valuable experience and acquaintance among the rivermen, and was allowed to take temporary

1. Colonel Triplett's aspersions on the Bridger family (3) are evidently not worthy of credence. He says: "The name of Bridger is familiar to all who have ever crossed the plains, especially to those who made that trip before the advent of the railroads, Fort Bridger being a noted resting place for all of the traders, pilgrims and trappers. Bridger came of an Illinois family, which, if reports of that day are to be believed, was far from respectable, though they could lay full claim to the first characteristic with which the genealogical epitaphist, as well as the novelist, endows his heroes—they were very poor.

"Used to rough knocks and plenty of them, at home, the life of the mountain trapper, when he was old enough to embrace it, presented no peculiar hardships to this man, upon whose birth and circumstances fortune had so far only frowned, and he was early in the field of adventure, upon the waters of the great continental divide, the backbone of a hemisphere.

charge of a ferry-boat, plying between the Bridger farm landing at Six-Mile-Prairie, and the St. Louis wharves. But with the changing fortunes at the farm it was soon decided that the sturdy youth should be apprenticed to Phil Creamer, a St. Louis blacksmith.

Young Bridger's service as lackey boy in the Richmond tavern; as a chore boy and general worker on the farm; and as an interested roustabout among the Mississippi and Missouri rivermen, provided a valuable breadth of experience, in spite of his native reticence, for he was incessantly active.

But the blacksmith shop was to form the iron banded portals of an extensive career beset with rugged hardships. For nearly five spark-filled and sweat-drenched years the brawny but observant young man, foregoing all ordinary schooling forever, formed and hammered things of iron as if shaping his own character to fit the strenuous life to follow. He was never loquacious but had a greedy interest in the fortunes of visiting frontiersmen. Thus with open eyes and ears, and a limitless capacity to assimilate information, he gradually built for himself a strong foundation of experience, acquaintance and general intelligence.

St. Louis was a mere trader's mart when the Bridger family first arrived, the population numbering about 1,500, and consisting of a motley throng of many nationalities, largely transients. Shrewd New Orleans and New England merchants, and stalwart backwoodsmen from the

"Death in an Indian combat presented no greater horror than such a death as his brother's in St. Louis, who perished in a drunken brawl, in the brothel of malodorous notoriety, kept at an early day in the city, by the infamous individual known as 'Captain Jack.' Cutting loose from all family ties, Jim sought the wilderness, certainly not a bad move, when we consider the character of his relatives. On the border, Bridger soon made his mark, being a man of great strength and activity, and fully equal to any of his comrades as a rifle shot.

"In the numerous skirmishes of the trappers, Bridger could be depended upon to go as far as any of his companions into danger, remain as long, and retreat as slowly. The burly borderer knew no fear, and always fought with a recklessness that suggests the idea that he was thus endeavoring to expiate some sin, or efface some stain from his name. Not that he, himself, had ever broken faith, or deserted a comrade—he was as true as steel, but the evil fame of his brother seemed constantly present to him, and he fought to banish it."

Ohio valley, formed a sort of enduring woof in the structure of civilization; while French Canadian trappers and traders interlaced their pathways with those of the half-breeds and Indians of many nations, to form the warp. Thus St. Louis formed the loom through which much of the fabric of early western civilization was woven.

Mountaineers with their tales of the moccasin trails; a rabble of rivermen with their adventures in distant waters; and Indians and frontier traders with their peculiar but adventure-laden atmosphere came and went as patrons of the Creamer blacksmith shop and as traffickers in the St. Louis streets. Thus was young Bridger enabled freely to turn the pages of the book of useful knowledge, and to groom his desire for travel and personal adventure.

The fur trade of the far West was a much discussed and much indulged occupation in St. Louis, nearly every resident being more or less concerned with it; but no one had followed the ramifications of such gossip any more interestedly or intelligently than young Bridger. He had observed with keen attention the portentous plans afoot for supplanting the independent fur trader in the wilderness.

While dependent on a dilatory Indian patronage of the scattered trader's posts, the fur trade generally had attained its greatest possible proportions. To increase the volume of business therefore the plans of the new order were to send an organized body of trappers into the fur country to push the business aggressively.

Thus while Bridger never learned to read, he was nevertheless promptly aware of the appearance and purport of the following notice in the *Missouri Republican*, a St. Louis newspaper, of March 20, 1822. In the nature of the circumstances, the notice seemed to have been addressed to just such persons as he.

"To enterprising young men. The subscriber wishes to engage one hundred young men to ascend the Missouri River to its source, there to be employed for one, two, or three years. For particulars enquire of Major Andrew Henry, near the lead mines in the county of Washington, who will ascend with and command the party; or of the subscriber near St. Louis. Signed, WILLIAM H. ASHLEY."

CHAPTER II

INTO THE INDIAN COUNTRY

THE authors of the notice just quoted, which has become one of the most celebrated "Want Ads" known to publishers, were well known about St. Louis. Major Henry had trapped the northern Rocky Mountain streams extensively in 1809 and 1810, but the Blackfoot Indians drove him out. He had subsequently busied himself developing a lead mine near St. Louis, keeping a discerning eye on the fur trade. General Ashley was a man of political and business prominence in St. Louis, also interested in the mines, in the manufacture of gunpowder, and in a banking enterprise. He was active in the state militia organization, having risen through the ranks to the status of general, and had been elected lieutenant governor of the new state.

Fur packs valued at from \$10,000 to \$15,000 had been brought down the Missouri River by individual operators; and it was plain that great opportunities awaited those who went into the trade with acumen. Thus the Henry-Ashley Company, or the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, as the organization was later to be called, commanded almost unlimited capital, and was prepared to do business in a large way. Needless to say the call for the hundred young men was electrical, and the desired quota was soon signed up. Some of these came from the best families on the frontier, among them, besides James Bridger, being Etienne Provot,² Thomas Fitzpatrick,

2. Provot, not Provost, and the final letter is silent, thus giving the origin of the word Provo, a city in Utah. Judge Walter B. Douglas, of St. Louis, assisting the Very Reverend W. R. Harris, D.D., L.L.D., gathering some facts for "The Catholic Church in Utah," writes: "St. Louis, January 9, 1909. I went to the court house myself this morning and after a long search I found the answer to your question. I discovered that, in the record of the administration of the estate of Etienne Provot the name is Provot, not Provost. Searching the files of the 'Missouri Republican' I came across this obituary notice inserted in the issue for July 4, 1850: 'Died, yesterday afternoon, about 4 o'clock, Mr. Etienne Provot. The friends and acquaintances of the family are invited to attend his funeral this afternoon at 4 o'clock, from his residence, on the corner of Lombard and Second streets, to the Catholic burial ground.'"

Milton and William L. Sublette, and others whose names were to figure prominently in the future development of the fur trade.

Evidently following Henry's advice, it was planned that the party should ascend the Missouri River by boat, attended by a land party with horses, to the Three Forks (Montana). They would trap the streams on both sides of the Rocky Mountains, probably penetrating to the mouth of the Columbia River and return before the expiration of the three-year contract with the enlisted men. Three Forks was the scene of Henry's defeat at the hands of the Blackfoot Indians³; but his vivid memory of the furry riches in the section overcame all fear of the Indians.

Less than a month was required to purchase and assemble the needful trapping and hunting equipment, together with a supply of suitable merchandise for subsistence and for barter with the Indians. Thus on April 15, 1822, the expedition embarked at St. Louis. Major Henry was actually in command, though the adventurous Ashley also accompanied the party.

Young Bridger spoke in later years of his desire to earn money in that first trapping employment for the use of his sister, who subsequently, if not then, was in a parochial school. Thus we would like to believe that she and the aunt were among the friends at the wharf to bid the mountain-bound party good speed. Two great keel boats laden with the supplies, together with a land party with a large number of horses, started off simultaneously, the horsemen holding themselves in readiness to assist the boatmen with the towing lines, or cordelles.

The keel boats on the river in those days were very large, often seventy-five feet in length, fifteen feet in width, drawing two or three feet of water when loaded. They were propelled by poles placed against the river bottom, in the hands of men walking along the gunwales;

3. Blackfoot (Siksika Sioux). Probably so named because their moc-casins were discolored in the ashes of prairie fires. Habitat, Alberta and northwestern Montana. Blackfeet (Sihasapa Sioux); so named because they wore black moccasins. Habitat, western South Dakota. However, the two forms of the name are often interchanged by supposedly good authorities. See Hodge: Handbook of American Indians.

though in deep water the cordelle ropes to shore were necessary. From twenty to twenty-four pole pushers were necessary, in addition to the shore party, the boats also being fitted with a sail at times. Usually small, closed decks fore and aft, or forming a superstructure the entire length of the boat, provided cabin and storage space, while lockers along the sides had covers which could be raised as barricades in case of an attack. A small canoe or two for errands was also a necessary part of the equipment. There is no record of Bridger's specific place in this expedition, though circumstances lead to the presumption that he rotated with others pulling the cordelle and pushing a pole.

Much good seamanship was required to navigate the uncharted, sand choked and snag-bristling stream, especially at that season of the year when it was awakening with the spring rise. Disaster thus frequently threatened, and finally befell the expedition, near the close of the second week on the river. Just below Old Fort Osage, and about fifty miles below the mouth of the Kansas River, one large boat loaded with about \$10,000 worth of merchandise, was gored by a snag, and sank so suddenly the crew escaped with difficulty, and the cargo was a total loss.

The expedition was halted only temporarily by the wrecking of the boat, but pushed on upstream with the remaining supplies, which, for just such an emergency, had been about equally divided. No detailed diary of this expedition has come to light, though it must have been a summer of much hard work, with no little adventure thrown in. The river was far from being a lonely course, for it was hemmed by the homes of the Pawnees, Otoes, Sioux of many branches, and other Indian tribes, with now and then a trapper's fort or hut. Trappers, hunters, and other frontiersmen were encountered here and there on the river, some of them coming out of the Rocky Mountains with their cargoes of valuable fur.

Buffalo were plentiful most of the time, and toward midsummer, as the extensive timbered regions gave way to the plains country except for the fringe of trees along

the stream, the elk and deer became a choice for game meat. Rabbits and grouse with other game birds and beasts kept the hunters happy and the boatmen's fare abundant and varied. Fort Atkinson was passed (near Council Bluffs) and soon afterward the Arikara villages, and then the Mandans (Sioux). By this time berries, wild cherries, currants, and other wild fruit were welcomed by the hardworking rivermen, together with the almost mature squashes and corn found among some of the tribes.

Early in August while moving laboriously along the tortuous stream some distance to the northwest of the Mandan Indian villages (Bismarck, N. D.) a band of Assiniboine Indians fell in with the land party, with a great show of friendship. The visit occurred at a point where the stream channel forced the boatmen a considerable distance from their fellows on land. This circumstance was evidently anticipated by the wily redskins, who suddenly took forcible possession of the entire band of fifty horses and raced away to the north with them. It was a misfortune almost as calamitous as the loss of the keel boat; and it was a flagrant act of treachery which must have marked the beginning of young Bridger's vigilant and eternal distrust of the Indian.

Already Major Henry had recast his original plan of reaching the Three Forks for the winter encampment, having decided to fort up at the Great Falls of the Missouri. But even that was enemy territory, being the land of the Blackfoot Indians, among whom he stood little show of replacing the string of horses just lost. Thus on reaching the mouth of the Yellowstone it was decided to halt for the season.

General Ashley returned at once to St. Louis, evidently going by canoe with a small party of assistants. It was his plan to recruit another trapping party, and obtain supplies and merchandise for better covering the fur country during the next few years. Henry and the remaining men, including Bridger it may be remarked, set about the establishment of a fort which should form a base of operations. Selecting a sequestered site on the

tongue of land between the two rivers, about a mile above the junction where the banks were high, several log cabins and an enclosure or stockade were erected.⁴

The fine autumn season of 1822 afforded ample opportunity to get fortified up against unwelcome Indian visitors, and to scour the region for suitable horses for spring use. Then came the long confinement to which all but Henry himself were unaccustomed. But the winter was shortened and enlivened for the active young trappers by hunting and exploring excursions, and visits to friendly Indians' villages. Indian visitors were rather numerous, and a considerable amount of trading was done. Buffalo hunts increased the skill of the riflemen, there being a few of these animals wintering in the valley. Association with the Indians also gave them a facility with the sign and spoken language of the country, and withal the wintering became a schooling for most of them, in which they learned to prepare their own food and make their own clothing, and to accomplish other necessary frontiering duties.

The dawning spring time of 1823 brought many other white trappers into the country, some of whom had wintered along the river; and with them came a heightening of the hostility of certain tribes, particularly the Black-foot Indians, who resented the encroachment. Nevertheless Henry and a selected group of trappers, boatmen, and horsemen, were on the move up river toward the heart of the fur country with the first breaking up of the river ice. With so many in the field it was desirable

4. Fort Union. This site, by the way, though abandoned the following autumn, was re-established by the "U. M. O." (Upper Missouri Outfit), in October, 1828, as Camp Floyd. The post, subsequently, when further improved by other parties, took the name of Fort Union, being one of the largest and best built forts in the West, and having much of the time a larger complement of clerks and tradesmen than any other similar establishment. The post was visited at one time or another by practically every western trapper of note.

Fort Union at its best was two hundred and forty by two hundred and twenty feet in size, surrounded by a palisade of square hewn pickets about a foot thick and twenty feet high, making a formidable inclosure. Extraordinary bastions of stone twenty-four feet square and thirty feet high were constructed at the northwest and southeast corners. Barracks for the employees, and a two-story residence for the commander were built within the enclosure.

to get on the ground early, not only for trapping the beaver streams, but for gleaning the Indian country for peltries, by trade.

While effecting the long portage at the Great Falls, or immediately afterward, a goodly contingent of trappers at some distance from the main party was suddenly pounced upon by a horde of Blackfoot Indians in war array. It was a bitter skirmish, in which the trappers fought a determined fight, but they were evidently greatly outnumbered, and retreated with the loss of four killed and several injured. The pursuing Indians made it so unpleasant for the visitors, that instead of filling their boats and packs with peltries, they were driven precipitately out of the country empty handed, even more violently than Henry had been twelve or thirteen years before.

They were disgraced, but not discouraged; in fact they soon learned that they were to be congratulated at escaping so easily; for a party of men operating for the Missouri Fur Company, moving up Pryor's Fork of the Yellowstone, had almost simultaneously suffered a worse fate from an organized Blackfoot attack. Messrs. Immel and Jones, leaders of the party, together with a large number of men, were killed, and several were wounded, the remainder being driven unceremoniously out of the district.

It can only be conjectured that young Bridger saw some of the fighting, or at least the ghastly results of it, near the Great Falls. It is certain, from scattered bits of information at hand, that he was engaged in numerous Indian fights, with many bloody and hairbreadth escapes, of which there is no formal record, particularly as to time of occurrence. From the beginning Bridger proved to be a formidable Indian fighter. He was an expert rifleman early in his career, having evidently had rifle practice in St. Louis; and aside from this accomplishment, he was an obedient soldier under orders. He also became a fearless and crafty antagonist when on his own resources.

CHAPTER III

ARIKARAS OPPOSE TRAPPERS

MAJOR HENRY held his trappers at the Yellowstone fort for a while, awaiting Ashley, to whom he had sent a courier⁵ early in the spring, asking that additional horses be purchased from the Arikaras, or other Indians, on his way up the Missouri River. But instead of Ashley's coming as expected, young Jedediah S. Smith and a seasoned companion came bursting into the fort, fleet across country from Ashley, telling of a miserable defeat at the Arikara villages.

Ashley's messengers stated that they required as many men as Henry could spare, and they needed them quickly. The daring couriers had met with a number of serious adventures on the way, but were ready and anxious to return.

Henry selected about eighty trustworthy fighters, including young Bridger, and embarked at once on the river, taking Smith and his companion in his party. Speeding down stream Henry joined Ashley shortly, below the Arikara villages, near the mouth of the Cheyenne River.

At the time the couriers were sent to Henry, Ashley had dispatched his wounded men by boat to Fort Atkinson (Council Bluffs) with messages to the commandant, Colonel Henry Leavenworth, telling of his predicament. It happens that Colonel Leavenworth simultaneously received tidings by courier of the defeat of the Missouri Fur Company party on Pryor's Fork.

5. The Courier or Express carried messages and general intelligence between St. Louis and the trapping parties in the mountains two or more times a year, traveling by canoe and on horseback. Miscellaneous information was also continually filtered through the mountains very effectively by Indians, free trappers, and other scouts. Usually a wide awake trapping party knew something as to the location, circumstances and plans of all other important parties in the field; and practically every inhabitant of the West, both red and white, knew the approximate dates and places for holding the principal rendezvous for trade, through the fleet and efficient courier system that was maintained.

The ominous attitude of widely separated Indian nations brought a prompt decision from Colonel Leavenworth to join the needy trappers with military aid. About two hundred and fifty troops with supplies, ammunition, and two six-pound cannon, loaded into three keel boats, embarked from Fort Atkinson on June 22. On the 27th they were reinforced by being overtaken by about sixty men of the Missouri Fur Company, having two boat loads of supplies, including a five and one-half-inch howitzer.

This already formidable war organization was still further augmented on July 19 at Fort Recovery (South Dakota) by a large band of Sioux Indians, anxious to assist in punishing their old enemies, the Arikaras. A few days later about two hundred additional Sioux appeared for the same purpose. Very shortly then, this vast assemblage of fighters gathered at the mouth of the Cheyenne, with the Ashley and Henry parties, some fifteen miles below the Arikara villages, and prepared for the onslaught.

The Arikara Indians had been established in the mid-Missouri River region, and to the westward, for more than a generation, and were probably the most enterprising and independent tribes in the West. They dwelt in earthen homes dug into the ground and covered on a suitable framework with sod and earth. Each lodge or group of lodges housed two or three families, or probably from ten to fifteen individuals ordinarily, the domiciles being capacious, sometimes opening into one another.

They tilled the soil industriously, raising squashes, pumpkins, beans, and an abundance of corn, the latter giving them a certain prestige among other tribes who bartered extensively for this food. The men hunted the buffalo in winter, and caught fish from the river in season with ingenious basket traps. They were semi-aquatic, being expert swimmers. Their fuel was obtained from driftwood on the river, much skill being exercised in roping and retrieving the floating timber, sometimes from floating ice cakes.

In spite of this apparent culture, the Arikaras were, however, a very fickle people, of deep treachery, having been friendly to one party of whites, and violently hostile to another without apparent reason or preliminary warning. They were enemies of long standing against the Sioux, and were nourishing a smouldering hatred for the whites, when Ashley first appeared before the villages June 1, 1823.

Suspecting a breach of faith, Ashley governed himself with circumspection, but sought nevertheless to negotiate for the horses which he and Henry required. Exchanges were thus made at prices amicably agreed upon; and diplomatic calls were made between Ashley and some of the chiefs. However, before the next dawn, June 2, 1823, Ashley, sleeping on one of the boats, was suddenly awakened and apprised of the killing of a trapper and the imminence of a general Indian attack.

Forty trappers were on land with the horses, the party thus being divided and unguarded. At daybreak, before defense preparations could be made, the trappers were showered with a deadly fire from several hundred Arikara guns.

Ashley instantly ordered the horses swum across the river, but the attempt was soon abandoned because of the exposure. He then endeavored to send aid to the landmen, but the boatmen demurred, practically mutinying, for fear of the Arikara guns.

When skiffs were finally landed the horsemen had gallantly concluded for the moment to avenge their dead comrades and fight it out; but as nearly half their number had been slain or wounded, and the horses were mostly killed, they wisely slipped over the bank and swam to the keel boats about ninety feet distant. Some of the wounded were quickly drowned, and others were carried away by the current.

It had taken but fifteen minutes of Arikara firing to send the bleeding and defeated remnant of the trappers floating down stream in distress. All the horses and all the property left on shore were lost; fourteen men

were dead, and nine were wounded, the latter including old Hugh Glass, an experienced and valued frontiersman.

The cowardly boatmen frustrated Ashley's plan to land presently for the purpose of recuperating and renewing the attack, by forcing him far out of reach of the Arikaras, demanding that they await heavy reinforcements before again attacking. This Ashley reluctantly acceded to, and sent the wounded to Fort Atkinson and young Smith as a courier to Henry, as previously stated.

CHAPTER IV

THE ARIKARA SHAM BATTLE

COLONEL HENRY LEAVENWORTH, a distinguished veteran of the War of 1812, arranged his forces, consisting of about four hundred soldiers and trappers, and seven hundred Indians, in a most formidable array. General Ashley and the trappers were assigned a position against the river; Joshua Pilcher, experienced frontiersman and head of the Missouri Fur Company at the time, was given charge of the Sioux, between Ashley and Leavenworth, the latter taking the left or west wing with his troops. The artillery was moved up the river by boat, in competent hands. It was a thrilling situation no doubt for such young men as Bridger, who were being initiated into Indian warfare on a comparatively grand scale.

It is evident that after their first success, the Arikaras improved the time gathering recruits, for on August 8, 1823, when the Leavenworth command moved forward, about seven hundred Arikara warriors were massed together, armed largely with good rifles, and supported by more than two thousand squaws, children, and older people.

The two villages consisted of about seventy lodges each, surrounded by an effective palisade twelve or fifteen feet high, within and without which were ditches. There were a number of outlying positions for spies and sharp-shooters; and a contingent of Indians had been located across the river in the axis of the great bend, opposite the lower village.

Early on the morning of the 9th Colonel Leavenworth moved his organization forward, the irrepressible Sioux being allowed to forge ahead, in which position they collided violently with a concentration of Arikaras. Two Sioux were killed and seven wounded, while twelve Arikaras perished within a few seconds' firing; however,

the Arikaras stood their ground and the Sioux were temporarily repulsed, having been unsupported.

Tardily enough, however, the trappers were allowed to rush forward near the river, while the troopers closed in on the far left. Though prevented from firing because intercepted by the Sioux, this advance alarmed the Arikaras, who then retreated. In this position, instead of enthusiastically assisting the Sioux in a general attack, the troops and trappers were ordered to lay by and await the coming of the artillery; this was not till evening.

"Meanwhile the Sioux amused themselves by cutting up the slain Arikaras and attaching cords to the detached arms, legs, hands, and feet, which they dragged about on the ground" (4). On the morning of the 10th an attack was planned on both villages simultaneously. Unfortunate it is for the present occasion that there is no specific record of the part young Bridger played in this memorable battle, for we would fain see him in action. We only know that he shared the combat with the Ashley trapper-troops, who acquitted themselves splendidly.

While the troops were being re-formed for the new attack, the Sioux having grown a little cool, became doubtful of the ability of the attackers to annihilate the Arikaras; and they were especially dubious about their own ability to obtain any valuable spoils. Thus they rode off to the cornfields of the Arikaras for feasting and thieving.

The first howitzer fire on the barricaded village killed the Arikara chief, Grey Eyes, and the second felled the medicine flagstaff within the stockade. The uniformed infantrymen advanced to within three hundred yards of the lower village, and fired a single volley, without deadly aim or meaningful interest, but merely "to discharge their guns, which had been loaded for a long time."

Leavenworth's orders were discouraging and not understood, in such desultory fighting; but he then announced an effort to storm the villages, after the artillery had failed to rout the enemy. His own troops were to do the brunt of the storming, but the trappers were ordered to attack direct along the river bank, to divert the

Arikara's attention. The trappers crept to within twenty paces of the palisade and opened a most creditable fusillade. The trappers were to be supported by the Sioux but the latter refused to leave their pilfering in the cornfields, just as Pilcher had predicted to Leavenworth; he said they could not be re-engaged until the Arikaras were on the run, a situation which might stimulate their participation again, for their natures are not suited to the tedium of a siege.

Thus, despite the good work of the trappers, Leavenworth held off, preferring the stratagem of tolling the Arikaras out courteously with an interpreter and inviting them to surrender. The stratagem failed, however, and the troops about village Number 2, were recalled, and the corn-husking Sioux were notified, as a form of threat, to save their stragglers from the tomahawks of the Arikaras.

The Sioux were disgusted with Colonel Leavenworth's mode of warfare; and with a full-chested contempt for him and his men, they stole six mules from the troops, and seven horses from the unguarded stock of the trappers to bear away their stolen corn, and departed during the night.

If James Bridger's education in the ways of the wily red man had been borne in on platitudes before, it was on this occasion hammered in by the hard knocks of grim experience. He, with the other trappers, had been without food for two days, yet had done the bulk of the fighting. However, they were allowed to succeed the Sioux in the cornfields to break their forty-eight-hour fast. Incidentally it is presumed they indulged their wonderment at the failure of the troops to attack the Indian village while the trappers had it under counter fire.

They faced the finish with grave misgivings, if not with some disgust. That evening, Colonel Leavenworth, General Ashley, and Major Pilcher in conference, observed a lone Sioux in a parley with an Arikara. The latter was suing for pity on their women and children. Leavenworth seized the opportunity, and sent the Arikara for his chiefs. It was a pathetic appeal these chiefs pre-

sented on arrival; and they readily "accepted" Colonel Leavenworth's terms for a cessation of hostilities. He required that they restore all of Ashley's horses and property, and surrender five men as hostages; they were also to pledge the safety of all trappers on the river.

The Colonel claims to have been actuated in pushing an easy peace treaty, partly by the fear that the Sioux might form an alliance with the Arikaras against him. But the trappers were chagrined at the failure to give the pleaders a sound thrashing, such as they deserved. Thus Pilcher, probably expressing the feelings of most of the trappers, created a temporary scene by refusing to smoke the peace pipe.

This alarmed the Indians, and they returned in doubt and disorder; but on the morrow, August 11, after much parleying, a treaty was drawn up and signed. In the restoration of Ashley's property, the luckless trappers were forced to accept three rifles, one horse, and sixteen robes, the rest of their stock being killed and the property destroyed. It was also indicated by the artful Arikaras that the upper village would contribute nothing because they had not participated in the original attack on Ashley.

It was clearly necessary to accept short shrift, a diplomatic defeat, or to renew the attack. Many of the rank and file were in favor of vigorously pushing the latter alternative. Sparring for time, however, for some unexplained reason, Colonel Leavenworth postponed until the 12th any actual attack. But when morning came the Arikaras had completely flown.

The campaign, so earnestly and worthily begun, became a farce, due to an apparent change of heart on the part of Colonel Leavenworth, after the attack had begun. The trappers had borne the brunt of the expense, property loss and bloodshed; and Major Pilcher had martialed the Sioux forces in far greater numbers than should have been necessary, and the Sioux had made the first and only important attack.

Very soon afterward it became apparent that the quasi-victorious Arikaras were becoming more arrogant and domineering than previous to their "chastisement." "You

came to restore peace and tranquility to the country, and to leave an impression which would insure its continuance," Pilcher's wrath burst forth on Colonel Leavenworth's head. "Your operations have been such as to produce the contrary effect, and to impress the different Indian tribes with the greatest possible contempt for the American character. You came (to use your own language) to 'open and make good this great road'; instead of which you have, by the imbecility of your conduct and operations, created and left impassable barriers" (2).

The young trappers could not have failed to reflect something of the viewpoint of their chiefs in this matter; nor could they have failed to gain a great insight into the fickle character, and the treacherous habits of the Indians, when unrestrained. It was the first experience of many of the younger trappers, with the military arm of the government in action, and their first participation in a carefully laid campaign against the Indians.

In the light of subsequent events, it is evident that no participant in the Arikara campaign sensed the great need of improved military tactics, and acquaintance with the Indians, more than did young Bridger. And it is certain that no one profited more than he from that experience; for he was to become the Indians' superior in every frontier art and achievement, and he was ultimately to understand them as did few other men. He was to become their staunchest friend in peace, and their fiercest foe in war. Also, he was ultimately to assume the conspicuous place, the place he saw was virtually vacant in the Arikara fight, of authoritative scout, guide, and adviser to the commander of the military forces; the position of interpreter we may say, not for the Indian tongue, but for the Indian mind.

CHAPTER V

BRIDGER FIGURES IN A BEAR FIGHT

THE fiasco with the Arikaras ended, Major Henry marshaled his trappers promptly for the overland journey back to the mouth of the Yellowstone. General Ashley, having delivered his supplies to the trappers, returned to St. Louis for the third essay at the stubborn business of outfitting another fur gathering party. Colonel Leavenworth bore his troops and his own humiliation back to Fort Atkinson, leaving a free field to the Arikaras, who promptly rose up again in all their former haughtiness.

This departure of the trapper band, under Major Henry, became the real embarkation into the wilderness, and forthwith history began in the fur trade of the far West, for there were men enrolled who made it. Edward Rose, guide and interpreter for the party, had been with Ezekiel Williams and Wilson P. Hunt, in pre-Astoria days; Louis Vasquez and James Bridger subsequently became trapper and trading post partners and proprietors; several members of the Sublette family were getting their initiation into the business which they helped to make great; Jedediah S. Smith became one of the West's most valuable trapper-explorers; Thomas Fitzpatrick, Etienne Provot, David E. Jackson, and other organizers and leaders of western men were present; and as hunter for the party, the (since) much heralded Hugh Glass.

Glass became famous in the traditions of mountain men, as the hero of the most tragic bear story extant; and it is about as well authenticated as the bear story itself, that James Bridger played a noteworthy but back-stage part in this thrilling encounter. The episode occurred on the fifth day out from the Arikara fight, and is worth noticing for a number of reasons. Chittenden (2) and Dale (4) have used edited condensations of the story

as printed in the *Missouri Intelligencer* of June 18, 1825; and Chittenden presents some notes from P. St. George Cooke's version picked up about 1827 (5).

Rufus B. Sage (6) got it from a Rocky Mountain camp-fire circle in 1842; but there had been a number of bear stories handed about by that group of story tellers, evidently, and the Sage version as printed is barely identifiable as the Hugh Glass adventure. Sage does, however, delete some of the most gruesome details used by others and evidently known to him, which, because of their improbability, deserve to be omitted.

Colonel Triplett (3) relates the story briefly, making Glass's wounds much less severe than they really were, and saying that they were sewed up with deer sinews and treated with "nature's grand medicant, cold water," for a week. The rest of the story is a sort of parody on the real story, but still rather near the facts, and without any horrible features.

Glass's reappearance in camp ten days after being "buried" was the only episode that ever made Bill Gordon forget to laugh, according to Triplett. The writer erroneously supposes the bear fight to have occurred on the site of the Custer battlefield; his information came from comrades of Glass, after the lapse of many years.

Henry Howe (7) sets the story in type in 1851, his version probably hitting about as near the facts as so brief a narrative might, after having been tossed from lip to lip for twenty-five years or more. None of the printed narratives use Bridger's name as that of the younger participant in this celebrated performance; but "the late captain (Joseph) La Barge (an old Missouri River pilot and master of frontier days) who remembers the tradition well, says that it was James Bridger," writes Chittenden. We are thus accepting as an established fact, the general belief that Bridger was the junior trapper left on guard with the wounded Glass.

The following is the Henry Howe version, omitting only the first paragraph, which is a dissertation on grizzly bears in general:

ADVENTURE OF A TRAPPER

* * * * *

"Some years ago, a trapping party were on their way to the mountains, led, we believe, by old Sublette, a well known captain of the West. Among the band was John Glass, a trapper who had been all his life among the mountains, and had seen, probably, more exciting adventures, and had had more wonderful and hair-breadth escapes than any of the rough and hardy fellows who make the far west their home, and whose lives are spent in a succession of perils and privations.⁶

"On one of the streams running from the 'Black Hills,' a range of mountains northward of the Platte, Glass and a companion were, one day, setting their traps, when, on passing through a cherry thicket, which skirted the stream, the former, who was in advance, descried a large grizzly bear quietly turning up the turf with his nose, searching for pig-nuts. Glass immediately called his companion, and both proceeding cautiously, crept to the skirt of the thicket, and taking steady aim at the animal, discharged their rifles at the same instant, both balls taking effect, but not inflicting a mortal wound. The bear giving a groan of agony, jumped with all four legs from the ground, and charged at once upon his enemy, snorting with pain and fury.

"'Hurra, Bill,' roared out Glass, as he saw the animal rushing toward them, 'We'll be made "meat" of, sure as shootin'!' He then bolted through the thicket, followed closely by his companion. The brush was so thick that they could scarcely make their way through, while the weight and strength of the bear carried him through all obstructions, and he was soon close upon them.

"About a hundred yards from the thicket, was a steep bluff; Glass shouted to his companion to make to this bluff as the only chance. They flew across the intervening open and level space like lightning. When nearly across, Glass tripped over a stone and fell, and just as he rose, the bear, rising on his hind feet, confronted him. As he closed, Glass, never losing his presence of mind, cried to his companion to close up quickly, and discharged his pistol full into the body of the animal, at the same moment that the bear, with blood streaming from his nose and mouth, knocked the pistol from his hand with one blow of its paw, and fixing its claws deep into his flesh, rolled with him to the ground. The hunter, notwithstanding his hopeless situation, struggled manfully, drawing a knife and plunging it several times into the body of the beast, which, ferocious with pain, tore with tooth and claw, the body of the wretched victim, actually baring the ribs of flesh and exposing the very bones. Weak from loss of blood, and blinded with blood which streamed from his lacerated scalp, the knife at length fell

6. Of course the leader's name was Henry; and Glass's given name was Hugh.

from his hand, and Glass sank down insensible and apparently dead.

"His companion, who, up to this moment, had watched the conflict, which, however, lasted but a few seconds, thinking that his turn would come next, and not having even presence of mind to load his rifle, fled back to the camp, and narrated the miserable fate of poor Glass. The captain of the band of trappers, however, dispatched the man with a companion, back to the spot. On reaching the place, which was red with blood, they found Glass still breathing, and the bear dead and stiff, actually lying upon his body. Poor Glass presented a horrid spectacle; the flesh was torn in strips from his bones and limbs, and large flaps strewed the ground; his scalp hung bleeding over his face, which was also lacerated in a shocking manner. The bear, beside the three bullets in his body, bore the marks of about twenty gaping wounds in the breast and belly, testifying to the desperate defense of the mountaineer. Imagining that if not already dead, the poor fellow could not possibly survive more than a few moments, the men collected his arms, stripped him of even his hunting shirt and moccasins, and merely pulling the dead bear off from the body, they returned to their party, reporting that Glass was dead, and that they had buried him. In a few days, the gloom which pervaded the trapper's camp, at his loss, disappeared, and the incident, although frequently mentioned over the camp fire, at length was almost entirely forgotten in the excitement of the hunt and the Indian perils which surrounded them.

"Months elapsed, the hunt was over, and the party of trappers were on their way to the trading fort with their packs of beaver. It was nearly sundown, and the round adobe bastions of the mud-built fort were just in sight, when a horseman was seen slowly approaching them along the banks of the river. When near enough to discern his figure, they saw a lank, cadaverous form, with a face so scarred and disfigured that scarcely a feature was discernible. Approaching the leading horsemen, one of whom happened to be the companion of the defunct Glass in his memorable bear scrape, the stranger, in a hollow voice, reining in his horse before them, exclaimed:

"'Hurra, Bill (Jim Bridger), my boy! You thought I was gone under that time, did you? But hand me over my horse and gun, my lad; I ain't dead yet, by a long shot!' What was the astonishment of the whole party, and the genuine horror of Bill and his worthy companion in the burial story, to hear the well known but now altered voice of John Glass, who had been killed by a grizzly bear months before, and comfortably interred as the two men had reported and all had believed!

"There he was however, and no mistake; and all crowded around to hear from his lips, how, after the lapse of, he knew not how

long, he gradually recovered, and being without arms or even a butcher knife, he had fed upon the almost putrid carcass of the bear for several days, until he had regained sufficient strength to crawl, when tearing off as much of the bear's meat as he could carry in his enfeebled state, he crept down the river; and suffering excessive torture from his wounds, and hunger and cold, he made the best of his way to the fort, which was some eighty or ninety miles distant, and living mainly upon roots and berries, he, after many days, arrived in a pitiable state, from which he had now recovered, and was, to use his own expression, 'as slick as a peeled onion.' "

CHAPTER VI

HUGH GLASS AND THE GRIZZLY BEAR

HUGH GLASS'S adventure with the grizzly has recently gained for him a monument in the form of a book-length narrative poem (8). At the same time a few modern writers have done the opposite thing, of crucifying the characters of the secondary participants, letting James Bridger off with a scotching, because of his youth. Practically all latter day opinions, however, are based on the Cooke and *Missouri Intelligencer* (Chittenden) stories, which are here reproduced at some length, chiefly to preserve an important story in which Bridger figures. The following is from Chittenden (2).

MIRACULOUS ESCAPE OF HUGH GLASS

* * * * *

"After the Leavenworth campaign was over, Andrew Henry set out for the Yellowstone River and Glass was one of the party. Their route lay up Grand River through a country interspersed with thickets of brushwood, dwarf plum trees and other shrubs indigenous to this barren soil. As these nomadic parties usually drew their food, and to a large extent their raiment, from the country through which they were passing, it was necessary to keep one or two hunters ahead of the main party in search of game. Glass, having a reputation as a hunter and a good shot, was often detailed upon this important duty. On the present occasion he was a short distance in advance of the party, forcing his way through a thicket, when he suddenly came upon a grizzly bear that had lain down in the sand. Before he could 'set his triggers' or even turn to fly, the bear seized him by the throat and lifted him off the ground. Then flinging him down, the ferocious animal tore off a mouthful of his flesh and turned and gave it to her cubs, which were near by.⁷ Glass now endeavored to escape, but the bear, followed by her cubs, pounced upon him again. She seized him by the shoulder and inflicted dangerous wounds in his hands and arms. His companion had by this time come up and was making war upon the cubs, but one of them drove him into the river, where, standing waist deep in

7. This statement is absurd; the fighting bear, defending her young, does not so suddenly become the docile mother tendering nourishment to them.

the water, he killed his pursuer with a shot from his rifle. The main body now arrived, having heard cries for succor, and after several shots from close at hand, slew the bear as she was standing over the prostrate body of her victim.

"Although still alive, the condition of the unfortunate hunter seemed well-nigh hopeless. His whole body was in a mangled condition. He was utterly unable to stand, and was suffering excruciating torment. There was no surgical aid to be had and it was impossible to move him. Delay of the party might bring disaster upon all, yet it was repugnant to the feelings of the men to leave the sufferer alone. In this predicament Major Henry succeeded, by offering a reward, in inducing two men to remain with Glass until he should expire, or until he should so far recover as to bear removal to some of the trading houses in that country. These men remained with Glass five days, when, despairing of his recovery, and at the same time seeing no prospects of immediate death, they cruelly abandoned him, taking with them his rifle and all his accoutrements, so that he was left without means of defense, subsistence, or shelter. The faithless wretches then set out on the trail of their employer, and when they overtook him, reported that Glass had died of his wounds and that they had buried him in the best manner possible. They produced his effects in confirmation and their story was readily accepted.

"But Glass was not dead, and although the dread messenger had hovered for many days so near, yet the stricken sufferer would not receive him, but persistently motioned him away. When Glass realized the treachery of his companions, far from despairing on account of it, he felt a new determination to live, if for nothing else than to search out his base betrayers and call them to account. There was a spring near by and hither Glass drew himself. Over it hung a few bushes with wild cherries and near by were some buffalo berries that he could reach. Here he remained day after day, gradually nursing back his strength, until he felt that he could undertake to leave his lonesome and unhappy camping ground. He resolved to strike out for Fort Kiowa, a post on the Missouri River, a hundred miles away (South Dakota). It required magnificent fortitude to set out on a journey like that, still unable to stand, and with hardly strength to drag one limb after the other; with no provisions nor means of securing any, and in a hostile country where he was at the absolute mercy of the most worthless renegade that might cross his path. But the deep purpose of revenge held him up, and a stroke of fortune came to his rescue.

"He happened one day upon a spot where a pack of wolves had surrounded a buffalo calf and were harrying it to death. Glass lay low until the calf was dead, when he appeared upon the scene, put the wolves to flight, and took possession of the calf. Without knife or fire, it was not an easy thing to turn to account his good

fortune, but hunger is not fastidious and Glass most likely took counsel of the wolves as to ways and means of devouring what he required. Taking what he could with him he pursued his way, with inconceivable hardship and distress, and at last reached Fort Kiowa.

"After an experience like that through which he had just passed, it might be supposed that Glass would have been inclined to rest at the Fort, at least until his wounds could get well. But he had not long been there when a party of trappers came along in a boat bound for the Yellowstone River. This was just the opportunity that he wanted, and he promptly joined them, bidding adieu to the protection of the fort.

"When the party were nearing the Mandan villages, Glass thought to save a little time by going overland across a bend in the river to Tilton's Fort, a trading establishment in that vicinity. It proved to be a lucky move for on the following day all of his companions were massacred by the Arikara Indians. Those always treacherous savages had but lately taken up their abode near the Mandan villages, and the travelers were wholly ignorant of the snare into which they were running. As Glass was approaching the fort he saw two squaws whom he at once recognized as Arikaras. Alarmed at his danger he sought to conceal himself, but too late, for the squaws at once notified the warriors, who immediately began pursuit. Glass, still feeble from his wounds, made an ineffectual effort at flight. His enemies were almost within gun shot when two mounted Mandans rushed forward and seized him. Great was his surprise and joy at this unexpected deliverance, and it gave him increased faith that he should yet live to accomplish his mission of revenge.

"The Indians carried Glass to Tilton's Fort, and the same night he left the fort alone and set out up the river. After traveling alone for thirty-eight days, all the way through hostile country, he had at length arrived at Henry's Fort, near the mouth of the Big Horn River. Here he was received as one risen from the dead, for no one had doubted the story of his companions. Glass was chagrined to find that his companions had gone to Fort Atkinson. Still intent on his purpose of revenge he promptly accepted an offer of service as a messenger to carry a dispatch to Fort Atkinson. Four men accompanied him and they left Henry's Fort on the 28th of February, 1824.

"The route of the party lay eastward into the valley of Powder River, thence southward to the sources of that stream, and across into the valley of the Platte. Here they made some skin boats and floated down the river until they were out of the foothills, when, to their infinite dismay they came upon a band of Arikaras, a part of Grey Eye's band, the chief who had been killed the previous summer by a shot from Leavenworth's artillery. The

new chief's name was Elk Tongue. The warriors came down to the river and by many protestations of friendship induced the travelers to believe that they were sincere. Glass had at one time spent a whole winter with the chief, had joined him in the chase, had smoked his pipe, and had quaffed many a cup with him in the wigwam. When he alighted from his canoe the old chief embraced him as a brother. The whites were thrown off their guard and accepted an invitation to visit the chief's lodge. While partaking of the hospitable pipe a child was heard to utter a scream and on looking around, Glass perceived some squaws carrying away their effects. The little party well understood what this meant, and springing at once to their feet fled with the utmost precipitation. Two of them were overtaken and put to death, one within a few yards of Glass, who had found concealment behind a point of rocks. Glass was thoroughly versed in the arts of Indian life and he succeeded in baffling their search until finally they abandoned it altogether. He had lost all of his property except a knife and flint, and thus equipped he set out in a northeast direction to find Fort Kiowa.⁸

"The buffalo calves at this season were very young, and as the country abounded in buffalo, Glass had no difficulty in getting what meat he desired, while his flint enabled him to build a fire. He was fifteen days in reaching Fort Kiowa, and at the first opportunity went down the river to Fort Atkinson, where he arrived in June, 1824. Here he found his faithless companion (for he now cherished revenge only against one of the party), who had enlisted in the army. Thus, under protection of the law, Glass did not feel disposed to resort to extreme measures. The commanding officer ordered his property to be given up and provided him with a new equipment. Thus appeased, he relinquished his scheme of revenge and contented himself with entertaining the people of the garrison with stories of his marvelous experiences.

"In weighing the two principal authorities for this story we are inclined to think that Glass's sudden relinquishment of his purpose of revenge may have been due to new light obtained from the two men who deserted him. It was asking a great deal for those two men to expose themselves to destruction for one whose life they doubtless believed was already as good as lost, and whatever may have been the considerations of humanity, it was only heroic indifference to personal safety that could have induced them to stay. They should have stayed, of course, but their failure to do so, is not without its justification."

8. Chittenden (2) quotes the following from an article in the *Missouri Intelligencer*: "Although I had lost my rifle and all my plunder, I felt quite rich when I found my knife and steel in my shot pouch. These little fixens make a man feel right peart when he is three or four hundred miles away from anybody or anywhere—all alone among the painters (panthers) and the wild varmints."

Captain Chittenden quotes from Cooke in footnotes to show that Glass encountered the young man (James Bridger) at Henry's Fort, and compassionately forgave him. It is significant, in the last paragraph above by Captain Chittenden, that the Captain followed the arraignment of these men reluctantly in the *Missouri Intelligencer* article. Undoubtedly the men who abandoned Glass had some of the arguments on their side. As to their robbing him, nothing is said of the condition of Glass's hunting-shirt after the bear had exposed his bones through it; nor of the clothing which they may have placed on Glass's back in its stead, during their five days' vigil. It would have been imprudent, moreover, to leave a good gun, and other trappers' equipment beside the body of a dead man.

CHAPTER VII

COOKE ELABORATES GLASS'S ADVENTURE

SOME additional details are supplied in P. St. George Cooke's narrative (5) of Hugh Glass's encounter with the bear, and subsequent related events; and notwithstanding his verbosity, and his greater joy in his own rhetoric at times than in his subject we will let Cooke tell the gist of the story.

SOME INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF HUGH GLASS, A HUNTER OF THE MISSOURI RIVER

* * * * *

"In the summer of 1823, immediately after the desertion and conflagration of the Arikara village consequent upon its attack by the Sixth Regiment, United States Infantry, a party of eighty men, under the direction of Major Henry (that had volunteered in that engagement) left this point of the Missouri River, intending to gain the headwaters of the Yellowstone to make a fall hunt for beaver. The party had journeyed four days in the prairie; on the fifth day we would introduce our hero (who has been rather backward) to the attention of the reader—if, indeed, it has not been already lost in the rugged field prepared for his reception.

"On the fifth day, Glass (who was an *engage* in the expedition) left the main body accompanied by two others, to make one of the usual hunts, by which, while subsistence is acquired the party is not detained. Having near night succeeded in killing buffalo, they were directing their common course to a point, near which they knew must be the position of the camp for the night; it was on a small stream and as they passed near one of its curves, Glass became somewhat detached from the others, intending to drink of its waters; at this moment his progress was arrested by the sight of a grizzly bear, issuing from beneath the bank opposite to him. His companions, overcome by their fears, which no obligation to share with him his unavoidable danger could resist, profited by their more favorable situation to attempt escape by flight, leaving him to his destiny.

"A contest with a grizzly bear, more tenacious of life than a buffalo, is always dangerous; to insure a probability of success and safety, all the energies must arise in proportion to the magnitude of the danger, and they must be shown in perfect coolness; the slightest falter, which with the many would result from a loss of

this presence of mind, would render the case hopeless and insure destruction.

"Glass would gladly have retreated, but he knew all attempts would be useless. This desperate situation only nerved him to the combat. All depended upon the success of his first and only shot;—with an aim cool and deliberate, but quick, lest greater rapidity in the animal should render it more uncertain, he fired his rifle. The shot was a good one; eventually mortal; but its immediate effect was only to raise to its utmost degree, the ferocity of the animal, already greatly excited by the sight and opposition of its intended prey; it bounded forward with a rapidity that could not be eluded, in pursuit of its flying adversary, whom danger, with means of defense, had inspired with deliberate action, but now only gave wings for his flight. But it was unavailing and he knew it—an appalling roar of pain and rage, which alone could render pallid a cheek of firmness, chilled him to the soul; he was overtaken, crushed to the earth, and rendered insensible, but to thoughts of instant death. The act of contact had been two blows, inflicting ghastly wounds, the claws literally baring of flesh the bones of the shoulder and thigh. Not sated with this work of an instant, the bear continued to pursue, with unabated speed, the flight of the two other hunters. The chase was to them awfully doubtful—every muscle of a hunter's frame strained to its utmost tension—the fear of a horrid death—the excitement of exertion—together producing a velocity seldom equaled by bipeds, had been unavailing in contest with that of the superior strength and fleetness of the raging animal. But, fortunately, it could not last—it was expended in the distance, from loss of blood—its exertions became more feeble—the sacrifice of a deserted comrade had saved their lives—they reached the camp in safety.

"When sufficiently recovered, they reported the death of Glass, and their escape from the pursuit of the wounded grizzly bear. A large party was instantly in arms. It had gone but a short distance when the bear was discovered and despatched without difficulty. Glass, they found, was not yet dead; they bore him to the camp, still insensible from the shock of his dreadful wounds. They were considered mortal, but of course bound up and treated as well as their circumstances would admit.

"A question then arose, how he should be disposed of; to carry him farther was useless, if not impossible; and it was finally settled that he should be left. Eighty dollars were subscribed for any two men who would volunteer to remain with him, await his death, and then overtake the party. A man named Fitzgerald, and a youth of seventeen,⁹ accepted the proposal; and the succeeding day the main party continued its route as usual.

9. This youth, we are told, was James Bridger, then 19 years of age.

"For two days they faithfully administered to his wants; then their imaginations began to create difficulties in their situation; at least their inactive stay became very irksome; and as they considered his recovery as hopeless, they equally agreed to think their remaining longer useless.¹⁰ Thus wrought upon, and from innate depravity, they conceived the horrid idea of deserting him, overtaking the party, and reporting his death—and they determined upon the prompt execution of their design—nay more, these most heartless of wretches, taking advantage of his first sleep, not contented with the desertion of a sacred trust, robbed him of his rifle, knife, and in short, everything but a small kettle containing water, and a wallet on which his head rested, and which fortunately contained a razor.

"On awakening, how could he realize his situation! Helpless from painful wounds, he lay in the midst of a desert. His prospect was starvation and death. He was deserted by the human race.

"But this act, which words cannot sufficiently blacken, perhaps gave a vital excitement. He muttered a mingled curse and prayer—he had a motive for living! He swore, as if on his grave or an altar, his endless hatred, and if spared, his vengeance on the actors in so foul a deed.

"Glass, when his water was exhausted, for fear he should become so weak as to perish for want of it, succeeded with great difficulty in crawling to the edge of the stream, where he lay incapable of further exertion for several days.

"Few are unaware, until tried, of their capacity for endurance; and the mind seldom shrinks from an exertion that will yield a single ray of hope to illumine the darkness of its waste.

"Glass did not despair; he had found he could crawl, and he determined to endeavor to reach a spot where he could better hope for succor. He crawled towards the Missouri, moving at the rate of about two miles a day! He lived upon roots and buffalo berries. On the third day he witnessed near him the destruction of a buffalo calf by wolves—and here he gave a proof of a cool judgment: he felt certain that an attempt to drive the wolves from their prey before their hunger was at least somewhat appeased would be attended with danger; and he concluded to wait till they had devoured about half of it, when he was successful in depriving them of the remainder; and here he remained until it was consumed, resting and perhaps gaining strength. His knees and elbows had, by now, become bare; he detached some of his other clothing, and tied them around these parts, which must necessarily be protected, as it was by their contact with the ground that motion was gained.

"The wound on his thigh he could wash, but his shoulder or

10. It may be doubted that the imagination of these men was any greater than that of Cooke.

back, was in a dreadful condition. For more than forty days he thus crawled on the earth, in accomplishing a five days' journey to the Arikara village. Here he found several Indian dogs still prowling among the ruins. He spent two days in taming one of them sufficiently to get it within his power; he killed it with the razor, and for several days subsisted upon the carcass.

"Glass, by this time, though somewhat recovered of the effect of his wounds, was, as may be supposed, greatly reduced; but he continued his weary and distressing progress, upon arms and knees, down the Missouri River. In a few days he was discovered by a small party of Sioux Indians; these acted toward him the part of a good Samaritan. The wound on his back was found in a horrid condition. It had become full of worms. The Indians carefully washed it, and applied an astringent vegetable liquid. He was soon after taken by them to a small trading house about eighty miles below at the mouth of the Little Missouri."

"Glass slowly recovered from his wounds."

* * * * *

Cooke then follows Glass minutely through all the adventurous way up the Missouri River with white traders to the Mandan villages, and thence alone toward the supposed rendezvous of Henry's trappers.

"In two weeks [after leaving the Mandans] he reached the mouth of the Yellowstone, having met neither white man or Indian; here he crossed the Missouri on a raft made of two logs, tied together with bark, and continued his journey up the Yellowstone. This is a wide and shallow stream, emptying into the Missouri from the south; it is even more muddy and rapid than the latter river, to which it is believed to have considerable agency in imparting these qualities.

"It was more than three hundred miles to the forks of the river, nearer than which he could scarcely hope to meet with any of the party, since it had set in very cold, which would cause the small detachment of trappers to be drawn into that point where he knew they were to winter. Right weary did he become of his journey, injured as he was to the toils and dangers which surrounded him. Almost in despair, and having at times nearly resolved to retrace his steps and winter with some of the most friendly Indians, one morning in December he was overjoyed to discover a hunting party of white men. On reaching them, long was it before they could make up their minds to believe their eyes; to believe that it was the same Glass before them, whom they left, as they thought dying of wounds, and whose expected death was related to them by two witnesses. It was to them a mystery; and belief of the act of black treachery, which could only explain a part of it, was slow in being enforced upon their minds. Over-

whelmed with questions or demands of explanation, it was long before he could ascertain from them in return, that the party had rendezvoused for winter at the forks, which was but a few miles distant; that Fitzgerald was not there, having deserted; and that the youth was still one of the expedition.

"Fiercely excited with conflicting feelings—the escape of the main object of his just revenge—chiefly for which he had made so long a pilgrimage—and the certainty of soon facing the accomplice of his crime, Glass hastened to enter the encampment.

"Nearly the first person he met, was the unfortunate and guilty young man [Bridger] and it so happened they came upon each other suddenly. All attempt must fail to describe the effect of his appearance upon the youth. Had he awoke from a deep sleep in the embrace of a grizzly bear, or been confronted at noonday by the threatening ghost (and such he believed of him) of a deeply injured enemy, greater could not have been his fear. He stood without power of any emotion; his eyes rolled wildly in their sockets; his teeth chattered, and a clammy sweat rose upon his ashy features. Glass was unprepared for such a spectacle; and well was it calculated to create pity; for some moments he could not find words, much less the act of his purpose. He leaned upon his rifle; his thoughts took a sudden turn; the more guilty object of his revenge had escaped; the pitiful being before him was perhaps but the unwilling and overpersuaded accomplice of his much elder companion; these and other thoughts crowded upon his mind, and he determined upon the revenge which sinks deepest upon minds not wholly depraved, and of which the magnanimous are alone capable; he determined to spare his life.

"With dignity and severity, but great feeling, he thus addressed the petrified youth, who but expected immediate death: 'Young man, it is Glass that is before you; the same that, not content with leaving, you thought, to a cruel death upon the prairie, you robbed, helpless as he was, of his rifle, his knife, of all with which he could hope to defend or save himself from famishing in the desert. In case I had died, you left me to a despair worse than death, with no being to close my eyes. I swore an oath that I would be revenged on you, and the wretch who was with you, and I ever thought to have kept it. For this meeting I have made a long journey. But I cannot take your life; I see you repent; you have nothing to fear from me; go—you are free—for your youth I forgive you.' But he remained mute and motionless; his reprieve, or rather pardon, for such it must be considered in a country where the law has never reached, could scarcely allay the awe and fear of an upbraiding conscience. He was taken off by some of the witnesses of the scene, in whose breasts pity had begun to take the place of wonder and resentment.

"Glass was welcomed as one recovered from the dead; one

whose memory—such is our lot—had already been swept far upon the gulf of oblivion. His services, ever highly appreciated, were again engaged in the company, where we leave him, employed as the rest, in the sole labors of supplying provisions, and of self defense from the extreme coldness of the winter. Only adding, that his determination of revenge upon the more worthy object of punishment from his hands, far from being abated, was rather confirmed; and that what he considered a sacred duty to himself, though postponed to a more convenient season, was still nourished as a ruling passion.”

Thus Cooke ends the tale.

CHAPTER VIII

EXPLORING THE WILDERNESS

WHILE trapping parties did not move on schedules, there is an item of interest in the announced dates in connection with the movements of Major Andrew Henry and his trapper band. Colonel Henry Leavenworth left the Arikara villages "at 10 A. M. August 15, 1823"; and it is reasonable to assume that Major Henry got away about the same time. The record is equally definite that a war party of Arikaras pounced upon the trappers on August 20, 1823, killing two and wounding two. This last date appears simultaneous with Hugh Glass's bear fight, which occurred on the fifth day out.

Considering the activities related, it was evidently the following day, at the earliest, when James Bridger and Fitzgerald were left on guard with the injured Glass. Therefore the Arikara attack must have been very fresh in the minds of these two men, if the treacherous Arikaras were not still actually prowling about the place, since the main party of trappers had moved forward. Thus we may be permitted to surmise that Bridger and Fitzgerald may have had other incentives for rejoining their comrades as promptly as possible. The situation certainly was no ordinary one.

Howsoever, this chronology brings Bridger and Fitzgerald up with the main party about the 23d, the date on which Henry reached the Yellowstone fort (1). At this place another band of marauding Indians, presumed to be Gros Ventres, attacked the trappers, killing four more men in a furious and discouraging conflict. It was also discovered that twenty-two of their precious horses left at the fort had been stolen by the Blackfoot and Assiniboine Indians; and forthwith seven more animals went the same route, despite the vigilance of the herders.

These were severe blows to an already staggering young fur company, yet Henry, supported by an excep-

tionally capable and faithful band, faced the situation resolutely. He decided to plunge at once into the heart of the fur country to rid himself of troublesome Indians if possible, and to do some extensive exploring, and some fall trapping as the fur thickened with the cold of early winter.

Moving up the Yellowstone without further delay, they were fortunate enough to find a band of Crows at the mouth of the Powder River, in southeastern Montana, from whom they obtained forty-seven horses. With this valuable addition to the trappers' equipment, Henry decided to divide his men at that point for better covering the tributaries of the Missouri.

Etienne Provot was assigned the captaincy of a small party, among whom James Bridger was cast. Taking a complement of horses to transport themselves, their supplies and equipment, and any furs they might catch or bargain for, Provot and his men journeyed southward along the Powder River early in September. Working his way toward the headwaters of that stream, in central Wyoming, hunting, exploring, and trapping a little night and morning at the encampments, Provot led his men over the divide toward the Sweetwater.

Keeping to the westward up this stream, they finally passed through the celebrated South Pass, over the Continental Divide, along which stream and through which pass the Oregon and California overland traffic was to become so heavy in later years. This is the first definitely known record of white discoverers of, or visitors to, the Pass; though some of the returning Astorians have described a route which may have been near if not in and through South Pass.

The original evidence that Provot, Bridger, and others discovered the Pass at this time is not as conclusive as one might wish, in spite of a prevailing and accredited tradition to this effect. The only alternative that has been put forth, however, is that Thomas Fitzpatrick, who had been told of the existence of the Pass by the Crows that fall, led the entire party through it in the spring of 1824, including Provot and Bridger. He wrote General

Ashley that he had discovered it.¹¹ This, however, seems no more satisfactory, and rather less probable, considering all the circumstances, than that Provot and his band should have discovered the Pass about as herein stated.

Through the customary lookouts and scouts, as well as chance Indian visitors, and their own forward movements, the Provot party gained a fair conception of the Green River valley in southwestern Wyoming, before returning northward from the vicinity of the South Pass.

11. John S. Robb, alias "Solitaire," wrote an article entitled MAJOR FITZPATRICK, THE DISCOVERER OF THE SOUTH PASS, which appeared in the St. Louis *Weekly Reveille*, Monday, March 1, 1847, as follows: (97)

The growing importance of that great highway to the Pacific, the *South Pass*, has naturally led to the inquiry, who was the *white man* whose footsteps first awoke an echo on this dividing ridge of the American continent? The credit of its discovery has been claimed—in a *quiet* way—by several, and of late, in a lecture delivered in this city, has been attributed to Gen. *Ashley*, a deceased citizen of St. Louis. The gentleman who named Gen. A. has been wrongly informed; to none of those heretofore publicly named does this honor belong—and, for the guidance of the future historian of the west, we deem it but justice to state, while the witnesses are still living to confirm the assertion, that Major *Fitzpatrick*, in the year 1824, led through the *South Pass* the first band of white men who ever crossed that route to the Pacific slope. We do not consider our assertion at all questionable, for witnesses of the fact are at present living a few miles from St. Louis; and in the mountains, among the traders and trappers, the Major's celebrated expedition to the Crow country in the year above named, his subsequent discovery of the Pass, and the trapping grounds of Green River, are matters of notoriety.

After the disastrous expedition under Gen. Ashley, in 1823, when his trapping party was attacked by the Ricarees, Major Fitzpatrick and his partner Jedediah S. Smith, who was afterwards killed on the Cimarrone, procured an outfit of goods from the General, and started with sixteen men on a trapping and trading expedition to the Crow country. William L. Sublette, formerly of this city, who recently died while on his way on business to Washington city, was one of the party. While on their route, upon one of the tributaries of Powder River, Mr. Smith was attacked and seriously injured by a grizzly bear, and the company were forced to leave him behind, in the care of two men, in a very hostile country. In a few days after their departure, Col. *Keemle*, the senior editor of this paper, then acting agent of the Missouri Fur Company, at the head of another trapping party, fell in with Smith and his companions, and accompanied them to the village of a roving band of Cheyennes, where Fitzpatrick's company again joined Smith, and, taking him along, they proceeded to the Big Horn, and thence on to the waters of the Yellowstone, where they wintered with the *Crow* nation. While among the Crows the Major learned from a chief that a pass existed in the Wind River mountains, through which he could easily take his whole band upon streams on the other side. He also represented *beaver* so abundant upon these rivers that traps were unnecessary to catch them—they could club as many as they desired. Having ascertained its locality, as near as the Indian chief could describe it, he started with the greater

Traversing the continental divide section of western Wyoming, they descended the Wind River to the valley of the Big Horn, gathering some furs and much information on the way. Thus by early winter they gained the mouth of the Big Horn, where Henry had preceded them by pre-arrangement, and established winter quarters within a trappers' fort.

Henry had dispatched Fitzpatrick and Smith, with a small party, into the Crow country to the east and south to trade and explore; and other parties had industriously explored and trapped the Big Horn, Yellowstone, and

portion of his band, leaving behind him in the Crow country, upon Wind River, his worn down horses and mules, in the care of Smith and a few hands, and with the best of the pack animals moved forward on this expedition of discovery. After laborious travel and hardship through the winter snows of that elevated region, they were gratified by reaching this important highway, through which the Major led his troop of pioneers down upon the Big Sandy, and thence to Green River—thus marshalling the way for that tide of emigration which now is treading towards a new land once thought unapproachable from this side of the Rocky Mountains.

Their visit to Green River and its tributaries was attended with marked success; beaver were plenty, and they were soon rewarded for their toil. One night, while engaged upon these streams trapping, a party of *Snake* Indians ran off every horse and mule belonging to their party. This, at such a distance from headquarters, was a great calamity; but they, nevertheless, continued their labors until a sufficient quantity of furs had been realized to warrant a trip home, when Fitzpatrick concluded it was time to hunt their animals. After an expedition—one of the most daring ever attempted in the mountains—they recovered their animals from the Indians, and, travelling night and day to get beyond pursuit, they reached their trapping grounds, packed their beaver, and started homeward through the Pass.

At a rendezvous upon the *Sweet Water*, agreed upon before setting out, they met Smith, and here the Major had skin boats constructed, in which he descended that stream. He was the *first white man* who ever navigated its waters. Entering the Platte they ran into the *Canon*, between the Sweet Water and Goat Island; and at the same spot where Capt. Fremont lost his instruments, by the upsetting of his India rubber boat, Fitzpatrick, after all his hardships and adventure, lost the greater part of his furs. By great exertions in swimming and diving in the stream, they recovered sufficient to pay off their liabilities to Gen. Ashley for the outfit purchased from him. The Major *cached* the furs he saved near where he encountered the disaster, and proceeding from thence to Council Bluffs, procured horses, returned and brought in his stock of beaver.

Gen. *Ashley*, at this period, was in St. Louis, where he received a letter from Fitzpatrick, relating to him the discovery of the *South Pass*, their successes in trapping on the newly found streams, and their disasters. In that letter the Major stated that the new route would easily admit of the passage of *wagons*; but little did he dream then that he himself, *twenty years* after, would encamp in that same passage with the first train of American emigrants destined to the new land beyond, and

Musselshell basins, gathering furs and making acquaintances, before housing up for the winter.

The trappers' winter encampment came to be looked upon as a season of irksome confinement and idleness. But the hundred or so energetic and spirited mountaineers congregated at the mouth of the Big Horn for the winter of 1823-1824 found plenty to do. The autumn explorations had extended well into the winter; and there was much hunting for game meat, herding and subsisting of the horses, and snow shoe junkets and other activities out of doors in good weather.

who were not only carrying along their *wagons*, but all the household necessities for furnishing their new homes! Such, however, in the course of human events, became also a portion of western history.

Gen. Ashley realized a fortune through Major Fitzpatrick's discoveries, for it opened to him one of the most valuable sources for obtaining furs ever discovered in that region. We wish we could say as much for the discoverer—at least, we will not passively see him lose the credit of what, at this day, is rightly considered a great achievement. Many of the streams and remarkable places through that portion of the country owe the preservation of their Indian names to the Major; for on his expeditions he always persisted in retaining them in preference to new titles, and by those names they are now known. Some of them have been translated into English, but the Indian meaning is still retained.

The natural diffidence and modesty of this veteran mountaineer has permitted many erroneous statements in regard to that country to remain uncontradicted; and indeed, except as matters of information to his friends, he has attached but little importance to his discoveries; but no misstatement should be allowed to remain uncontradicted which appropriates to another the hard-earned laurels of this old *Pioneer*!

"February 17, 1849. Colonel (Thomas H.) Benton, in a speech in the senate on a central road to the Pacific, said that the South Pass 'was discovered precisely forty years ago by the hunters.'" (92)

Ramsay Crooks, writing in a letter to the *Detroit Free Press* June 28, 1856, says in part: "In 1811 the overland party of Mr. Astor's expedition, under the command of Mr. Wilson P. Hunt, of Trenton, New Jersey, although numbering sixty well armed men, found the Indians **so** very troublesome in the country of the Yellowstone River, that the **party** of seven persons who left Astoria toward the end of June, 1812, considering it dangerous to pass again by the route of 1811, turned toward the southeast as soon as they had crossed the main chain of the Rocky Mountains, and, after several days' journey, came through the celebrated 'South Pass' in the month of November, 1812. . . . The seven persons forming the party were Robert McClelland . . . Joseph Miller . . . Robert Stuart . . . Benjamin Jones . . . Francois LeClaire . . . André Valée . . . and Ramsay Crooks," the writer of the paragraph quoted. But an examination of the itinerary of the returning Astorians by H. C. Dale and by Elliott Coues shows it most probable that they followed a course "very near South Pass, perhaps within twelve or fifteen miles of it, where they wandered off the Indian trail which would have taken them through the Pass, and kept about southeast until they headed the Sweet Water entirely." (*Oreg. Hist. Soc. Quar. Mar. 1916*)

But most of the party were young men, budding mountaineers, with much to learn, and the winter confinement was to them a busy school. Young Bridger, for instance, had already been out one winter, and had had a busy summer at a varied occupation; yet he required sophistication and hardening to make of him a trustworthy mountaineer, and a capable frontiersman; that is, to become skilled at meeting personal requirements, at trapping and hunting successfully and reading the general signs of the open.

The trapper must provide and maintain his own trapping equipment, which, besides a couple of horses for pack and saddle uses, consists of ammunition, including, usually, bullets made on the spot, a half dozen traps, hunting knife, rifle, deer or buffalo skins for bed and shelter, together with tobacco, extra clothing, and such other "possibles" or necessities as his taste may require. Of course in a large party the horses were herded by the camp tenders; and the bullets were made in large quantities for all, and bedding, when used, was often shared. On the move, the "possibles" and traps, in a leather sack, were kept with the saddle horse, the rest of the outfit being packed with the fur. The trinkets for Indian trading were usually carried in the company packs.

In summer the trapper's costume was a five-piece suit of buckskin, which he made himself, during the winter layover. There was a hunting-shirt, usually with an ample tail or skirt; pantaloons of the same soft but durable and protecting material; moccasins, and a hat or headband, all of buckskin. The felt hat, or bandanna handkerchief, were, however, often used on the head. The sewing was done, as the young trappers were readily taught by the old timers, by buckskin or other thongs or strings, and the decorations were of porcupine quills, and fringes left flowing at the seams or edges of the buckskin parts.

Over his left shoulder and under his right arm, he learned to sling his powder horn and bullet pouch, the latter containing also the flint and steel for fire making, together with any trinkets thought necessary. A belt at

the waist held a butcher-knife, in a sheath of stiff buffalo leather, dangling on a link or short chain, while a soft deer-skin case contained a small whetstone, for the trapper's knife must always be sharp. Often a tomahawk, or hatchet was carried, since the trapper worked much with wood.

Every trapper had his methods of taking the fur; that is, setting his traps and making his catches; and every one boasted of the superiority of his manner of operating, as a rule. Stories of the hunt told over the winter camp fires were like illustrated books of instruction to the young trappers. They learned that they must keep a constant and critical lookout for beaver or other fur sign.

A cottonwood tree may have been freshly felled by a beaver, but the trapper must ascertain whether it was felled for damming the stream, or merely for the food its bark and tender twigs would provide. He must also discern whether it has been visited within the past few hours, and if so, to put out some of his traps properly, so as to catch the beaver if still "using" thereabouts. The beaver is extremely timid, working only at night. To set a trap among beaver and fail to make a catch is unpardonable among self-respecting trappers.

In a fresh beaver runway, the trap is set three or four inches under water, suspended if necessary, or in a prepared hole, convenient for the foot of the beaver as the animal is entering or leaving the water. The trapper's aim is to have the beaver drown itself as quickly as possible when caught; and that it shall not reach a resting place above water where it can gnaw its foot off and go free. To this end several devices are employed, the large dry float-stick being perhaps commonest; this is so lodged that the beaver cannot well get ashore or to shallow water. A better, but more elaborate practice, requiring more skill and patience, is to slip the trap chain ring on a smooth pole, the end of which is thrust aslant into deep water, and the other end left free, or weighted to a high bank.

To anchor a trap just right, in each special location of the stream is one of the rare arts of the trapper; but

a still rarer art is to keep down foreign scents, such as odors from his own moccasins or hands, and bait a trap set at random in a stream where there is beaver sign. A most pungent and potent bait, or "medicine," as the trappers call it, comes from the beaver's own body. The long pod-like glands just beneath the skin in front of the genital organs of both sexes, contain this beaver castor; the glands are removed carefully and their outlets tied up to prevent leakage, and carried along with the trapper. A stick is dipped into the beaver castor and planted over or near the hidden trap; the inquisitive beaver is attracted by the odor, and betrayed to its doom.

Sometimes it is necessary for the trapper to wade the water for many miles, to leave the beaver runs on the shores free of foreign scents; and the handling of the float sticks, and especially the bait or medicine sticks, is a rare accomplishment. The trapper must learn to be as wise as the beaver itself, outwitting it in its own cunning. The commonest catches, however, are made about the dams and lodges, in the runways where the beavers go to and from the shore into deep water. That young Bridger learned his trapping lessons well is attested by a companion who claims that Bridger was subsequently the most skillful trapper in the West.

It would be unfair to the trapper-hunter, however, if the impression were gained that he pitted his wits only against the beaver. The active and versatile trapper laid his snares and aimed his guns at all kinds of fur and skin, making gain out of every creature that came his way. The skin of the buffalo, elk, and deer were always prepared for shipping or for clothing or camp use; and bear skins were especial prizes when taken right, there being a thrilling story of adventure with nearly every one. Otter, raccoon, foxes, and even muskrats were taken in large quantities, though it must be noted that in the early days when beaver fur was a sort of legal tender, and valued at from \$6 to \$8 each in St. Louis, the wise trapper caught all the beaver in his path, and all the other fur that he could catch handily.

CHAPTER IX

FROM THE BIG HORN TO THE BEAR

AMONG the visitors to the trappers' fort on the Big Horn, who punctuated the winter with interest, was Hugh Glass, who trudged in with the surprise of a lifetime late in January, 1824, as previously related. With the first softening weather, on the last of February, Glass and four companions departed for Fort Atkinson, with important messages, and a small pack of furs.

Utilizing some of the geographical intelligence already acquired by Provot, Fitzpatrick and others of the party, Glass passed up the valley of the Little Big Horn, over grounds made historic fifty-two years later by General Custer and his men, to the Powder River, and thence southward to the North Platte. He then followed the course of the Platte to Fort Atkinson near its junction with the Missouri.

Some desultory and experimental trapping was done that spring (1824) in the vicinity of the Big Horn rendezvous, but since the entire region had been frequently worked over by Missouri Fur Company trappers and free trappers, the harvest was poor. Therefore Major Henry gathered his forces and departed right early up the Big Horn to the south, across Wyoming.

Crossing the Continental Divide at the South Pass, and following the Big Sandy, they encamped for reconnoitre on the Green River. (Called also *San Buenaventura*, Spanish or Rio Colorado of the West, California, Rio Verde, and Seedskeedee or Prairie Hen River.) Furs were exceptionally plentiful, and a cargo was soon collected and made ready which Major Andrew Henry himself decided to accompany back to St. Louis. Journeying as he had come, by way of the South Pass, the Big Horn, Yellowstone, and Missouri rivers, he arrived late in the summer. While it was expected by the trappers that Henry would return that fall, he was evidently discouraged, and

is not known to have entered either the fur trade or the mountains again.

Thomas Fitzpatrick assumed the captaincy of a selected party and busied himself on the upper Green; and in a few weeks had loaded his men and animals to capacity in this untrapped territory. Fitzpatrick returned to the Sweetwater beyond the South Pass, and proceeded to put into operation a revolutionary scheme in fur transportation. Building a number of bull boats of buffalo hides, the furs were loaded and the valuable cargo set afloat. The swirling waters at the junction of the Sweetwater with the North Platte promptly swallowed up most of the furs, but enough was salvaged to make the journey to the frontier worth while, for himself and a small fraction of his men.

Jedediah S. Smith, though only twenty years of age, selected six daring and capable companions, and set out independently from the Green River gathering place, going to the upper Snake River and Jackson Hole country. Later he pushed westward into Idaho, falling in with a fur laden party of Hudson's Bay Company trappers. He obtained all their furs by some good bargaining, and then proceeded to explore the country northward into western Montana, being absent for several months.

Etienne Provot, heading another small band of independent trappers, broke away from the main party and passed up Black's Fork, another virgin fur country. Trapping slowly to the headwaters on the northwesterly shoulder of the Uinta range, Provot passed from Black's Fork over to the upper reaches of the Weber River about due east of Salt Lake City. Descending the Weber northwesterly (not the Provo southwesterly) and working the tributaries thoroughly, Provot emerged from the Wasatch walls onto the floor of the valley of Great Salt Lake, at the present site of Ogden, Utah.

Here he encountered a hostile band of Snake Indians; and in the fight that was precipitated, seven trappers were sacrificed. The Indians promptly vacated the valley, however, and the richly laden, but somewhat dispirited party of trappers went into winter quarters near

by, probably four or five miles north, in the sheltered alcove of the mountains above the present suburb of Five Points, or north Ogden.

Young James Bridger had observed these various parties moving outward from the gathering point on the Green River, toward all points of the compass; and he noted with interest the importance of the location not only as a general rendezvous, but as a commercial or trading center for the fur trade eventually. Thus unconsciously he sowed the seed, which nearly twenty years later fructified in the establishment of Fort Bridger in that vicinity.

He had remained with the principal party, until the smaller groups had departed; and having gleaned the locality of its beaver, this remainder of the Ashley trappers set their faces westward. Moving across the filaments of Hams Fork they came upon the beaver laden waters of the turbulent Bear River, on the Utah-Wyoming boundary. Just who was the captain of this residue of trappers is not known, though James Bridger becomes by far the most conspicuous figure in it, because of his discovery of Great Salt Lake early that winter.

Trapping and exploring Bear River and its affluents, with a general examination of Bear Lake on the way, the party sojourned at Soda Springs and examined the country somewhat to the northward of this present day resort. As the summer advanced, however, they moved on down the Bear River, across the lava plain at Grace, threaded Oneida Canyon, and emerged into Willow, now Cache, valley (Utah), which was to become an important rendezvous and resort for fur traders. One trapper was killed by a comrade on the way down the Bear.

Some weeks were spent trapping the Cache valley streams, including Blacksmith's Fork and Logan River, to their sources; and the party finally settled into winter quarters, probably in some such sheltered place as the mouth of Logan Canyon, or Blacksmith's Fork. One trapper was lost during the winter while making a journey within the valley, and his body was not recovered.

The loss of a man in this manner was very unusual,

and is explained as due to some accident, since mountaineers as a class are as accurate as the wild animals themselves in maintaining their orientation and position. Beginning with the objects about him, the trapper learns to observe everything minutely, and to appraise the meaning of every turned leaf, every blade of grass pressed down, every broken twig, the unusual acts of domestic and wild beasts, or the flight of birds; every movement of every object is a phrase or a sentence written by nature's hand to him.

With equal intimacy and discernment does the trapper trace out the configuration of the land; the defiles become the lanes, and the ridges become the highways to him, which lead to valleys, plateaus, or peaks, just as real highways lead to villages and cities. These places are impressed upon their minds not only by the thought of having to retrace or retravel them; but by rehearsing them with their companions, particularly when assembled in the rendezvous or winter quarters and notes of the season are being compared. The trappers were first to go into every nook and corner of the great West; and the mountains, the streams, the valleys and the "holes" still bear many of the significant names given to them by these primitive men.

CHAPTER X

BRIDGER DISCOVERS GREAT SALT LAKE

THERE was much conjecture among the trappers in the Cache valley during the late autumn of 1824, as to the farther course of the Bear River and the location of its outlet. Especially was the subject an enigma of consuming interest to James Bridger, the budding geographer and guide whose advice and opinion on geographical and topographical matters in the coming years were to bend the course of armies, and of trans-continental railways. Bridger had his opinion as to the course and destination of the Bear, which evidently was at variance with the opinions of others; the result was a wager, which Bridger determined to settle.

It is possible that others planned to accompany him, since Louis Vasquez has been erroneously credited with a share in the discovery; and it may be that the bull boat of hide which Bridger pulled together for the occasion was finally found to be too small for extra passengers. In any event, Bridger, it is understood, rode the boisterous Bear alone. He passed through the canyon leading from Cache valley (Bear River Canyon) in a few hours, where he stopped to reconnoitre. Climbing onto the rocky shoulders of the southern end of the canyon, he gained a view of the present Bear River valley, and in the distance, some twenty-five miles to the south, a body of water. Returning to his bull boat he traversed the remaining distance to the outlet in Bear River bay of Great Salt Lake. Typical of Bridger's thoroughness he examined the waters beyond the estuary of the Bear, tasting and finding the lake water salty. He returned promptly to the Cache valley winter quarters and reported his experiences; and the belief prevailed that he had reached an arm of the Pacific Ocean.

Bridger's exploit, or discovery, became a matter of common knowledge and comment among the trappers of

this and other encampments later, and no one is ever known to have denied Bridger the credit of discovery. Robert Campbell, who went to the mountains with Ashley's men in 1825, and who later as an employer of Bridger became his staunch friend, states decisively that Bridger discovered the lake, and that he was alone on the little journey in the bull boat.

Lieutenant G. K. Warren, of the U. S. Topographical Engineers, in his Memoir of the exploration of certain Pacific railroad routes, published in 1859 by the government, makes a comprehensive examination of the various claims of discovery and exploration of Great Salt Lake, and concludes as follows:

"Being convinced that, down to the days of the American trappers, the Great Salt Lake had never been seen by white men, nor definite knowledge about it obtained, I addressed a letter to Robert Campbell, Esq., of St. Louis, a gentleman well known for his acquaintance with the early Rocky Mountain fur trade. The following is his reply:

"SAINT LOUIS, April 4, 1857.

"*Dear Sir:* Your favor of the 25th ultimo reached me at a very fortunate period to enable me to give you a satisfactory reply to your inquiry as to who was the first discoverer of the Great Salt Lake. It happened that James Bridger and Samuel Tullock, both met at my counting room after a separation of eighteen years, and were bringing up reminiscences of the past when your letter reached me. I had it read to them and elicited the following facts:

"A party of beaver trappers who had ascended the Missouri with Henry and Ashley found themselves in pursuit of their occupation on Bear River, in Cache (or Willow) valley, where they wintered in the winter of 1824 and 1825; and in descending (sic., discussing?) the course which Bear River ran, a bet was made between two of the party, and James Bridger was selected to follow the course of the river and determine the bet. This took him to where the river passes through the mountain, and there he discovered the Great Salt Lake. He went to its margin and tasted the water and on his return reported his discovery. The fact of the water being salt induced the belief that it was an arm of the Pacific Ocean; but in the spring of 1826, four men went in skin boats around it to discover if any streams containing beaver were to be found emptying into it, but returned with indifferent success.

"I went to Willow or Cache valley in the spring of 1826, and

found the party just returned from their exploration of the lake, and recollect their report that it was without any outlet.

"Mr. Tullock corroborates in every respect the statement of James Bridger, and both are men of the strictest integrity and truthfulness. I have known both of them since 1826. *James Bridger was the first discoverer of Great Salt Lake.*

"I am happy in being able to give you the information and of the character that you wished for.

"Your obedient servant,

"ROBERT CAMPBELL."

There has been a slight tendency to believe that Bridger's exploit may have occurred in the early spring of 1825; but this is rather improbable. The fall and early winter seasons in this region are usually open and pleasant, while the later winter and the long spring are usually seasons of much storm and inclemency, and the streams are high and turbulent for some time after breaking up in the spring. Moreover, the Bear usually freezes over in early or mid-winter, and remains closed many weeks; and since the record is specific that Bridger made the journey in a boat made of skins, the belief is unavoidable that he discovered the lake in the late autumn or early winter of 1824.

It is possible that other white men may have visited the lake at an earlier date, but there is no knowledge of their having done so. The most probable person was Etienne Provot or some member of his party, who wintered that year near the present site of Ogden. If Provot actually proceeded to the mouth of the Weber immediately on emerging from the Wasatch Mountains, he may have preceded Bridger to the lake a few days or a few weeks, though this is a very slim probability. Provot was encumbered with some furs, besides having been distracted by an overwhelming Indian fight on arrival at his proposed winter quarters.

The lake is fifteen or twenty miles from Ogden by way of the river; and the intervening country is marshy and barren much of the way, being comparatively inhospitable and uninviting, especially to men in their circumstances. Moreover, Provot had little of Bridger's curiosity and quest for geographical knowledge, and made no ex-

planatory note as to whether he first saw the lake close up, or from the foothills of the Wasatch Mountains. Unquestionably if he had visited it and found the water to be strong brine he would have made some specific mention of the fact.

Therefore we must lean toward Bridger, solely, as the "discoverer" (one who reveals or makes known) of Great Salt Lake. In another sense Silvestre Velez de Escalante discovered the lake in 1776, for the Indians at Utah Lake apprised him of its existence; and a discoverer is also one who first comes into the knowledge of something. Indeed, Baron La Hontan, in May, 1689, wrote a story and drew a map about a salt lake "somewhere amid the wilds west of the Rocky Mountains" (11).

A report was made to the United States Congress on May 15, 1826, by Mr. Baylies, on the Northwest Coast of America, in which he mentions a visit to Lake Timpanogos (the earliest name for Great Salt Lake and subsequently applied to Utah Lake) in the summer of 1821 made by Samuel Adams Ruddock. (19th Cong. 1st sess. Report 213, H. R.)

"The committee . . . report further:

"That since their former report was submitted, they have obtained some interesting information respecting the geographical character of the territory of the United States on the Pacific Ocean.

"This information was derived from Samuel Adams Ruddock, who, in the year 1821, performed a journey by land from the Council Bluffs to the mouth of the Columbia River.

"Ruddock was one of a trading party which left the Council Bluffs after the 12th of May. The party were mounted on Indian horses. Keeping near the Platte on the north bank, they reached the Paunee village on the 18th of May, and then pursuing a course due west two hundred miles, they crossed the Platte immediately below its fork on the 26th of May; and then keeping a course South by West three hundred and fifty miles, reached the ravines of the high mountains of New Mexico, on the 6th of June, through which they passed, and after a further journey of sixty miles arrived at Santa Fé on the 8th.

"On the 9th of June this party crossed the Rio del Norte, and pursuing a northwest direction on the north bank of the river Chamas and over the mountains, reached Lake Trinidad; and then pursuing the same direction across the upper branches of the Rio Colorado of California, reached Lake Timpanagos, which is inter-

sected by the forty-second parallel of latitude, the boundary between the United States of America and the United States of Mexico. This lake is the principal source of the River Timpanagos, the *Multnomah* of Lewis and Clark. They then followed the course of this river to its junction with the Columbia and reached the mouth of the Columbia on the first day of August, completing the journey from the Council Bluffs in seventy-nine days.

"Many geographers have placed the Lake Timpanagos in latitude forty degrees, but they have obviously confounded it with the lake *Theguayo*, which extends from thirty-nine degrees and forty minutes to forty-one degrees, and from which it is separated by a neck or peninsula; the two lakes approaching in one direction as near as twenty miles.

"Ruddock denies the existence of the long river to which the name of Monges has been assigned, and which makes such an imposing appearance on the recent maps; if it does not exist, the river Columbia is the only one which flows into the Pacific Ocean from Cape Horn to its mouth, an extent of one hundred and four degrees latitude, which possesses any commercial advantages.

"The river Multnomah, the great southern tributary of the Columbia, of which heretofore so little has been known, is represented as navigable for any vessels which can enter the Columbia, for a distance of one hundred and fifty miles from its junction with the Columbia, where it is obstructed by a rapid. At the distance of about seventy miles, it receives the Clatmus, a considerable river from the east, and at a distance of eighty miles it receives the Cailapoio, a large river which has its source near the ocean, and south of latitude forty-two degrees.

"From its first rapids to the Lake Timpanagos the distance is about three hundred and twenty-five miles, making the whole distance from that source to the Columbia four hundred and seventy-five miles. Throughout the whole length it is represented as navigable for vessels of 8 feet draft at certain seasons of the year, no rapid (and there are several), being worse than the rapid of the Ohio at Louisville.

"The other branches of the Multnomah or Timpanagos interlock with the branches of Lewis's River.

"The course of this river is very similar to the Tennessee, being nearly semi-circular and according to Ruddock's account, it waters a rich and delightful valley; the character of the lands on this river is also represented as similar to the lands in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio, producing the same species of wood and timber, and the climate is uncommonly mild."

The forty-second parallel of latitude bisects Bear Lake, being the Utah-Idaho boundary line, as well as the old Mexican boundary line. But it runs twenty miles north

of the Great Salt Lake, and one hundred and ten miles north of Utah Lake, or Timpanogos Lake, as the Indians in post-trapper days called the latter.

Had Ruddock used an airplane he might have been excused for linking the Bear and the Snake together and calling them Timpanogos, for the Bear actually flowed through Portneuf canyon, joining the Snake below Pocatello, in geological ages past. Ruddock evidently traveled up the old trappers' trail immediately west of the Rocky Mountains in what is now Colorado, crossing the Green above its canyons in extreme southern Wyoming, thence reaching Bear Lake, though obviously the Congressional Committee and Ruddock managed to make a very tangled report.¹²

None of this evidence thus seems to affect James Bridger's laurels as the discoverer of Great Salt Lake. Bridger floated on its waters and tasted of them before he told the world about it. As a matter of fact an insignificantly few persons of pioneer days ever actually touched Great Salt Lake because so very much of its

12. A news story in the Sacramento Standard is reported as follows in part (94): "His name was Seth Grant, a Scotchman by birth, who came to America at an early age, in the year 1819, and joined the American Fur Company. In 1826 he accompanied Bridger—the founder of Fort Bridger—and his partner, Colonel Vasquez, to the then unknown wilds of the West, far beyond the headwaters of the Platte or Yellowstone. It was on one of these fur-seeking, marauding expeditions that the Frenchman, Colonel Vasquez, while out on an excursion, discovered the Great Salt Lake of Utah. The immense extent of the lake, with its mountains and islands, so deceived Vasquez and his party that they reported to their fellows that they had discovered an arm of the Pacific Ocean, and so, indeed, it seemed, for it was years before the error was corrected."

But "I not only doubt but I emphatically deny that statement," writes W. Marshall Anderson to the National Intelligencer, February 16, 1860, exercising a memory even longer than trapper Grant's. Anderson protests against the naming of the lake Bonneville by Irving; "In the name of Ashley, who had described this lake eighteen or twenty years before Captain Bonneville ever crossed the mountains, I protest against that name (Bonneville). What justice, what honor can there be, in claiming the right of naming that 'wonder of western waters' after Bonneville, when it had been found, circumambulated, and trapped on as early as 1820 by Provost?"

Grant could easily have transposed the name Vasquez for Bridger by a trick of memory after twenty-five years; but Anderson's declaration (from Simpson's report) (94) is too badly mixed for successful elucidation. Bonneville came to the mountains in 1832, and Ashley in 1826, not "eighteen or twenty years before." And Provost did not "circumambulate" the lake in 1820, for he did not visit the mountains until 1824, as set forth elsewhere herein.

shore line is either unapproachable, uninviting, or is located at a great distance across an alkaline or marshy plain. The many mentions made by trappers and travelers, of the lake, are in nearly all cases long distance views and impressions.

The so-called bull boat, such as that in which Bridger discovered Great Salt Lake, and such as the trappers generally made and used, was formed of green or undried buffalo hides, stretched over a frame of willow, birch, or other flexible wood. One method of construction was to fix the large ends of the sticks in the ground, in an outline of the craft desired. The free ends of the willows were then bent over and lashed together, and were then laced with other willows and lashed with thongs into a huge wooden basket.

The buffalo hides were trimmed and sewed tightly together, facing flesh against flesh at the seams, and the whole drawn tightly over the wooden frame, fleshy side out and made to fit the basket. A birch or willow gunwale served to trim the boat, and after being finished the projecting ends of the ribs were cut away. But before taking it from the ground, a slow fire was built under the boat to dry it out and harden it in shape, and incidentally to melt, and cause the hide to absorb the buffalo tallow which was smeared over the seams profusely. The water in the stream subsequently kept the tallow cooled below the melting point.

The drying process served also to close the pores of the rawhide, thus preventing excessive softness and flabbiness due to the absorption of water when in use. Likewise, it may be mentioned in passing, the trapper learned from the Indians to render his trapping moccasins waterproof by heating and smoking in this manner. The hunting and trapping moccasins were worn out too rapidly for having them made of thoroughly tanned leather, in the field. There was nothing better for waterproof and snowproof moccasin material such as the trapper required in the spring, than the rawhide tepee within which he has spent the winter, provided he has regularly built his camp fire within it, Indian style.

The tired trapper, with soggy one-piece moccasins extending well up on his legs, who settles into a comfortable sleep beside his camp fire will be rudely awakened shortly by the violent shrinking and squeezing of his drying foot-gear. Imperfectly tanned leather clothing was also troublesome in this respect during wet weather, especially the sleeves and trouser legs, which were subjected to greater strain. It was a good pair of trousers whose legs would not flare out like a flowing skirt at the end of a hard day in deep snow and shallow water; and once out of shape—always awry, until replaced.

CHAPTER XI

EXPLORING UTAH VALLEYS

A COURIER from Jedediah S. Smith reached the Cache valley encampment just ahead of the first sign of spring, 1825. Smith had left Flathead Post of the Hudson's Bay Company on the Montana side of the Rockies in the dead of winter, and was returning to his St. Louis associates by way of the Snake River route, in company with Peter Skene Ogden and a trapping party.

Leaving the Snake somewhere near American Falls, this combined party journeyed southward across the Raft River country, coming out onto the northern plains of Great Salt Lake. They were far to the west of the Cache valley destination, but soon found their way to a reunion with Sublette, Jackson, Bridger and other friends of Smith.

Smith was about the same age as Bridger, and had a similar unquenchable propensity for travel and adventure, and for gaining a first-hand knowledge of the country. It is evident that Smith related to Bridger the log of his journey the previous autumn through the interesting Jackson Hole country, and westward around what is now Yellowstone Park; for at the earliest opportunity, which came in the autumn of 1825, Bridger proceeded thence for an extensive hunt, making his first visit to the Park, it is claimed.

One is inclined to mention the presence, in the Cache valley party, of the cultured Peter Skene Ogden, as if he were an intangible entity, for his principal biographer (12) is not quite sure he came all the way with Smith; yet Ashley mentions "some very intelligent men" of the Hudson's Bay Company present at the rendezvous that summer, and while they may have been largely deserters as others have stated, James P. Beckwourth (13) says Ogden was in command of them, which fact Chittenden corroborates.

However, the Cache valley streams were thoroughly trapped that spring by the combined trappers, and the mountaineers then moved southward along the westerly foot of the Wasatch to the present site of Ogden. There is little doubt that the Sublette (Bridger) and Provot parties knew of the winter quarters and summer plans of each other. Provot had doubtless trapped Ogden River and its feeders, as well as the lower Weber before passing southward into the valley of the Great Salt Lake (Salt Lake City site) and thence to the Utah valley (Provo) for terminating the spring fur haul.

The evidence is that both parties spread southward that spring, probably in the general company of each other, examining Utah Lake and its feeder streams, at least superficially, and gaining from the resident Indians some knowledge of the country beyond, including the existence and approximate location of Sevier River and its saline outlet lake.

In connection with Provot's visit to this general region, Chittenden quotes an interesting story from Ferris (14) about Provot's baptizing the ground for his namesake city, Provo, in blood. He is said to have lost seventeen trappers who were killed in an unfair fight with Snake Indians. The story comes well authenticated as to occurrence and general location, having been substantiated by a number of trapping captains, and was also published in the *Missouri Intelligencer* of June 25, 1825, in St. Louis.

Briefly, arrangements were being laid for smoking the calumet with the slippery Snakes, when the chief declared it to be contrary to his medicine to have any iron near during the performance. Accordingly, to show their own good faith, Provot and his men laid their guns and side arms aside. Once seated in the supposed friendly circle, the Indians fell upon the unsuspecting trappers in an atrocious attack with tomahawks and knives, killing all but four or five of the party, the survivors including Provot.

Like many another well authenticated fact of history in western trapper annals, some of the details of this encounter are sadly lacking, and others are difficult of

justification in the light of other facts. For instance, it has been urged with good reason that this fight occurred in the autumn of 1824, as the early publication in St. Louis might indicate. But the most direct evidence is that Provot did not descend the Provo River, nor enter the Utah valley that fall, but went directly down the Weber to the present site of Ogden. Moreover, it seems hardly likely that all but three or four of Provot's men could have been killed, leaving that mere handful to winter alone, within two easy days' journey of the main party in Cache valley. Remembering the stormy reception given Provot at the "mouth of the Weber," at the hands of the Snakes, one is inclined to suspect that there are two stories of this one fight.

Be that as it may, the Sublette, Smith, and Provot trappers were back in the Salt Lake valley on May 24, 1825, on which date the chimerical Hudson's Bay Company trappers, being a part of Peter Skene Ogden's command, came into such clear focus that twenty-five or thirty of them deserted, uniting forces with the Ashley men, later disposing of their furs to General Ashley. About this time, also, came couriers with the news that Ashley with a large body of trappers and much merchandise was in the mountains, and had announced a general rendezvous to take place July 1 at a designated point in the Green River valley.

There may have been blood spilled by the trappers who baptized the Salt Lake valley into its civilized rights that spring, but James Bridger found it the most attractive and homelike valley known to him in the West, a distinction which was never changed in his mind; though he visited it often, it was with an affectionate interest of increasing proportions, according to his later declarations. Its streams were his pleasantest pathways as a trapper, its berries and other products were satisfying additions to his food, its rich and abundant grasses recuperated his animals, and its rich soils and gentle climate led him to visualize in it a land of prosperous homes.

General William H. Ashley, with a large number of newly recruited men, including a few old-timers such as

Thomas Fitzpatrick, Robert Campbell, and James P. Beckwourth, left St. Louis late in the autumn of 1824. Moving up the Missouri River, and thence by the Platte River route, they selected the south fork of the Platte on which to ascend the mountain slope.

Keeping on the move, when weather conditions and the snow cover would permit, they reached the mountains, and crossed the Laramie plains and the Red Desert of southern Wyoming during the winter. Evidently they laid over a few weeks here and there, for it was near the middle of April when they reached the Green River, above the mouth of the Sandy. From this point on the 21st three small groups of trappers under competent leaders were sent forth to explore, to gather furs, and to beat up the country among the Indians and free trappers in behalf of Ashley's proposed rendezvous. One party went northward, one northwestward, and one to the southwest, the latter being admonished to communicate as early as possible with the Ashley trappers west of the Wasatch mountains, including Provot, Smith, and Bridger.

Ashley himself and his principal trapper band embarked on the harmless looking Green River, in boats which they had made on the spot of raw buffalo hides. They reached Henry's Fork on the Utah-Wyoming boundary, April 30. This was considered by Ashley to be a suitable place for holding the general trading rendezvous, and he placed his signs accordingly, as his exploring parties had been advised. The merchandise was left here in a cache, while the trappers drifted innocently into Flaming Gorge, and incidentally into a series of adventures which made ordinary Indian fighting seem like a mere pastime.

The exciting story of this first passage of the canyons of the Green is told by General Ashley, though with passive coolness (4); by Beckwourth (13), who becomes a spectacular hero on his own admission, but who barely had a look into the canyon; and by Dellenbaugh (15), the latter managing, on some misinformation furnished to him, to conjure Provot and his party into existence at an opportune place in the canyon, laden with food supplies

and other comforts for Ashley's bedraggled men. Even Chittenden undertakes the narrative, though hampered as were most earlier writers, with a dearth of facts.

Beckwourth has, however, immortalized the location of the rendezvous, and particularly the entrance to Flaming Gorge, by denominating it "The Suck," because of the gruesome manner in which the water sucks itself, and all other moving objects, into an insatiable and perpetual system of swirls, rapids and falls, beginning about that point. Beckwourth was a mulatto, and his negro imagination, excited by fear, ran away with him in hair-breadth escapes, and acts of heroism in saving the life of General Ashley, which make good reading if not good history.

After seeing General Ashley and party through the first six or eight miles of Flaming Gorge country, Beckwourth gathered together the rest of the trappers, a goodly band, and moved up Henry's Fork, trapping on the way. Beckwourth covered the northern slope of the Uinta range, and some adjacent streams to the north, before returning in June to the merchandise cache at The Suck. He incidentally has a perfectly good Indian fight to while away the time until Ashley should return.

General Ashley, most unwillingly, and at times quite helplessly, was carried forward through dark gorges, impressive canyons, over rapids, whirlpools and falls, exhausting his men, his hopes, and his food supply. However, good management kept them right side up most of the time. At Ashley Falls, where Major J. W. Powell, in 1869, capsized a boat, and where a man following Powell was drowned that year, Ashley portaged his goods, and roped his boats over the danger.

Near Ashley Falls, in Red Canyon, the General painted his name and the date, "ASHLEY—1825" in large characters on the rock wall; and he thus provided an item of interest for practically every traveler since that date, as well as an interesting lot of copy for many historians and journalists.

Major Powell (16) saw the cryptogram in 1869, but the third figure was then indistinct, which he interpolated to be a 5 instead of a 2. The Major then related a story of

how all of Ashley's men, save himself and one other, were lost subsequently at Disaster Falls. These two fortunate men then scaled the canyon wall, and journeyed to Salt Lake City through many hardships, where they were given clothing, and remunerative employment on the Mormon Temple construction work. This only shows how tradition sometimes mixes facts as effectively as Green River mixes its waters; and also, how fickle is the spotlight of fame! The Mormon Temple was not begun until 1853.

Threading Lodore Canyon and riding most of its rapids, Ashley outnavigated Major Powell again by portaging his property around, and lining his craft safely over Disaster Falls, where Powell lost a boat. The camping utensils found here by Powell, and presumed by him to have belonged to Ashley, were more likely left at a much later date, according to Manly (95). Ashley ran or portaged the numerous rapids in Whirlpool and Split Mountain canyons, by persistent hard work, and finally reached the "Tewinty" (Uinta) River, where Indians replenished his food supply.

Depositing his cargo at the Uinta, which he decided to ascend after conferring with the local Indians, Ashley proceeded southward through Desolation canyon, and to a point at or near the present site of Green River City, Utah. Here he purchased supplies and an outfit of horses from a band of Eutaw Indians, and returned by land to the mouth of the Uinta. Ascending the Uinta, and its principal affluent, the Duchesne, the party crossed the Uinta mountain crest above the present settlement of Stockmore, Utah.

Making his way northward, Ashley descended into Weber valley, where, on the Kamas prairie, he was greeted by the Great Salt Lake valley trappers, including Provot, Smith, Sublette, Bridger, Jackson, and others. This was a most felicitous meeting, and Ashley heard with great interest from each of the leaders, a recital of their travels and adventures, and especially of the extent and condition of the fur trade as they had observed it. Ashley had some old maps, all badly awry, and had gained some very valuable geographical information of his own; thus

he absorbed with great interest the trappers' information about "Little Uta" and Great Salt Lake, and their tributaries, and the surrounding mountains.

After a few days' rest and a general renewal of acquaintances and discussion of plans for the future, the entire party broke camp and streamed eastward across the numerous transverse ravines, to the merchandise cache at The Suck. A large number of Canadians in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, a few free trappers, and several Indians accompanied the trappers to the site of the general rendezvous.

CHAPTER XII

ASHLEY CONDUCTS HIS FIRST RENDEZVOUS

THE trappers' summer trading rendezvous, an innovation of General Ashley's, was to the fur trade what the fall Roundup is to the livestock industry of the West; and in some respects, what a state fair is to an agricultural commonwealth. It succeeded the trading post as a mart of exchange for peltries and supplies, and of general business intercourse. Incidentally it was usually a place and a time for miserable, drunken debauches among a certain class of trappers. But Ashley's rendezvous were brief, and had the advantage of occurring but once a year.

Ashley's own men brought a great wealth of furs, and tolled in the Indians and free trappers who brought many additional contributions of furs and horses. By far the biggest haul secured in this manner was nearly \$75,000 worth of fine peltries taken from the Hudson's Bay Company, or men in that company's employ, or as some allege, deserters from the company. The cost of these furs was a mere trifle; indeed rumors appear in print that this lot was a Hudson's Bay Company's cache, with no one near it while it was being lifted and prepared for the journey to St. Louis. The record of the transaction, however, shows no casualties of conscience or employment contracts.

One almost strains both the eyes and the ears in a keen endeavor to gain a closeup view or impression of this motley and fascinating gathering. Stories of adventure, like gossip about the weather, were bandied about; yet from these stories of real life, a library of counterfeit tales have grown up. The appearances and habits of the mountaineers can only be conjectured in part, while we deplore the tardiness of such inventions as the camera and the motion picture machine. Not that we would pry into the gambling games, the personal combats, or the disgraceful brawls; but that we would establish the true

place of such men as James Bridger in this panoramic picture of frontier life.

James Beckwourth states that the rendezvous consisted of about eight hundred people, one-half of whom were women and children, spouses and offspring of the Indians and the older trappers present. Contests and sports of skill were common among the visitors; and while whiskey flowed like water, a much more general satisfaction came from the flour, sugar, coffee, and tobacco which many mountaineers had not tasted for many months.

The rendezvous business was opened on July 1, 1825, when all parties expected had assembled; but the trading proceeded so rapidly that Ashley was ready to close up on the 2d. His own trappers were to be re-employed, since that was the termination of their original contract, or were to be obligated to bring in their furs to the Ashley rendezvous if they operated as free trappers. There would seem to have been a tremendous amount of business to attend to, but Ashley was a good manager and had several good lieutenants.

Twenty men, including Smith and Beckwourth, were selected as assistants and stevedores to accompany the fur to St. Louis; and thirty more, including Bridger, were assigned as assistants on the journey to the head of navigation on the Big Horn or Yellowstone; while others accompanied the outfit as far as the Wind River country. A complement of mounts and pack animals was borrowed from the Hudson's Bay Company men, and from the Great Salt Lake trappers, these horses to be returned by the thirty assistants.

As the picturesque caravan filed out of the rendezvous, a hundred and ninety-one fur packs were accounted for, each one worth \$1,000 in St. Louis, though Ashley's indebtedness and obligations in the mountains were said to have been no more than \$75,000. Moving up the Green, and thence via the Sandy streams, Ashley led his men through the South Pass, and to the Sweetwater, where he lifted the fur cache left by Fitzpatrick the previous year. Blackfoot Indians attacked the fur bearers, while sepa-

rated, driving away most of their horses; but additional animals were taken from the trappers who were returning, and the caravan proceeded.

Within a night or two afterward, a band of Crow Indians, returning from a defeat before the Blackfoot Indians, who claimed they were tired of walking, made an attack with a view to carrying away the horses. In this, however, they were defeated, one of their number being killed and several wounded. When well into the Wind River valley, about a thousand Crows descended onto the caravan in a body, not with warlike intentions, but to inform Ashley that he had killed one of their number and wounded others, and must make retribution. He paid the mother of the dead warrior \$50 in goods, and doled out a satisfying amount to those who were able to exhibit fresh wounds. Noticing some familiar horses among the Crow stock, Ashley made inquiry; he was told, according to the Beckwourth narrative, that they were stolen in the spring, but were no longer needed. Thus Ashley repossessed eighty-eight fat horses, and proceeded on his way.

One is permitted to gain but an occasional glimpse of life among these frontiersmen, through the extremely small number of diarists and biographers, and through the old files of newspapers and the routine records of the fur companies and individuals. Thus many important events and most of the acts of even the leading men of the time are sunken deep into oblivion. Thus also the adventures of this wealthy fur caravan cannot be narrated as they occurred, nor even indicated except in the smallest part.

Reaching the canyon of the Big Horn, Ashley decided he would ship his furs through the canyon, in bull boats, and on rafts. It required several days to transfer the loads to the water, but when done, a few of the most trustworthy mountaineers were placed in charge and the craft pushed into the current. James Bridger was among those who harked back to their keel boat days on the Missouri, heaving a pole in charge of a raft laden with furs. It was a thrilling but rapid run, with but one or two stop-

overs, the party emerging safely near the present site of Thermopolis. Ashley and most of the men crossed the mountains with the horses to the end of the canyon, where the fur packs were replaced on the animals.

Ashley declares the rest of the journey was uneventful, and that most of the way was smooth. Beckwourth, however, rescues an unadorned tale from such rejection by introducing a wordy encounter with the Crows at the mouth of the Yellowstone. Edward Rose, the interpreter, figured conspicuously, but the matter was settled amicably without calling in the trappers with their guns.

The Henry fort, occupied by the Ashley men during the first winter, was in ruins, and the district was temporarily occupied by Indians who were in a conference with General Atkinson. It was fortunate for Ashley that Atkinson and his troops were about ready to return down the river, as they thus convoyed his valuable cargo to St. Louis in safety. Young Bridger's term of enlistment as trapper had expired, but he had become an adopted son of the mountains and spurned the opportunity of returning to civilization, preferring to remain in the wilderness. He returned, therefore, to the Green River valley with the remaining trappers.

Thus the thickening of the fur in the fall of 1825 found Bridger, with Thomas Fitzpatrick as brigade partner, at the head of a party of about thirty trappers, all freshly outfitted, moving northward into Snake River valley at Jackson Hole. On the trail of Jedediah S. Smith of the previous season, this was, however, virgin territory to these two leaders. It is regrettable that only a brief, general outline of this expedition is available (18), and that the fabric of fact ravel out into a thread of uncertain strength without the support of corroboration.

However, it is related that this was the beginning of a series of trappers' expeditions into the Two Ocean Pass and the Yellowstone Park regions. Robert Meldrum, a responsible young blacksmith at the American Fur Company's trading post on the Yellowstone the following summer, is credited with exploiting the story of Bridger's enterprise, and with visiting the same region with a few

companions in 1826. Bridger is said (18) to have visited at the trading post on the Yellowstone that year, and spread the report of the newly discovered and intensely interesting region.

Howsoever, as the beaver disappeared in their annual hibernation in the fall of 1825, and the streams became sealed with ice, the Bridger-Fitzpatrick company filed out of the mountains and out of the hazy history into the clearer focus of the proposed rendezvous in Willow or Cache Valley. One by one the other trapping parties came trailing to this concentration point, and among them a new group direct from St. Louis, under the guidance of James P. Beckwourth. This loquacious but capable and rather trustworthy mulatto brought important messages from General Ashley to William L. Sublette, who was nominally in charge of all the Ashley trapping parties in the mountains.

General Ashley, in St. Louis, between disposing of his furs, paying all his debts, and getting married, had found time to start Beckwourth and seventy trappers off to the mountains on October 30, 1825. Beckwourth claims to have been employed at \$1,000 to deliver the messages and return to St. Louis. But Sublette was the last of the trappers to reach the proposed rendezvous, and Beckwourth concluded it was then too late for him to return.

Sublette, however, saw no reason for lying idle, having been animated, no doubt, by Ashley's communications. He ordered the autumn catch of furs cached in Cache valley, and the winter rendezvous moved to the junction of the Weber and Ogden rivers in the Salt Lake valley, some thirty miles south. In this latter decision he was doubtless influenced by Provot and his men, who had wintered there the previous year, and had found there a very hospitable shelter. On getting the trappers established for the winter at this Salt Lake rendezvous, Sublette departed at once for St. Louis on important business with General Ashley. He was accompanied by a small bodyguard of companions, including Moses (Black) Harris.

Sublette was scarcely over the first range of moun-

tains before a mischievous band of Bannock Indians visited the remaining trappers' herds and cut out and drove away about eighty horses from the Salt Lake pastures. "On missing them the next day," says Beckwourth, "we formed a party of about forty men and followed their trail on foot; the ground was covered with snow at the time. I volunteered with the rest, although fortunately my horses were not among the missing. After a pursuit of five days we arrived at one of their villages, where we saw our own horses among a number of others.

"We then divided our forces, Fitzpatrick taking command of one party, and a James Bridger of the other. The plan resolved upon was as follows: Fitzpatrick was to charge the Indians, and cover Bridger's party, while they stampeded all the horses they could get away with. I formed one of Captain Bridger's party, this being the first affair of the kind I had ever witnessed. Everything being in readiness, we rushed in upon the horses, and stampeded from two to three hundred, Fitzpatrick at the same time engaging the Indians, who numbered from three to four hundred.

"The Indians recovered a great number of the horses from us, but we succeeded in getting off with the number of our own missing, and forty head besides. In the engagement, six of the enemy were killed and scalped, while not one of our party received a scratch. The horses we had captured were very fine ones, and our return to the camp was greeted with the liveliest demonstrations."

The Salt Lake rendezvous that winter, at the present site of Ogden City, was one of the greatest gatherings of the kind known to mountaineers. Hundreds of trappers from all parts of the West came to avail themselves of the agreeable company and the genial climate. A great many of the older men had squaw wives, and families of children, the trapper body proper thus totaling around seven hundred. But toward midwinter a tribe of Snake Indians invited themselves to the rendezvous, bringing all their families, livestock and other property. Beckwourth says they numbered two thousand five hundred, making a total population of about three thousand two

hundred. This protohistoric Ogden thus temporarily became a sizable predecessor of the present day city of the name.

The Snakes (a name applied generally to the Nevada and Oregon branches of Shoshone Indians) were good fighters and fur gatherers, but were poor providers, and inveterate beggars, usually impoverished and not always as clean as other Indians. Their name has been said to signify unclean and disheveled in other Indian tongues; though it is claimed that the name came from their habit of digging in the ground and subsisting on roots and the like; also that the name came from their ability to conceal themselves like snakes.

They were by no means a welcome lot in camp that winter, though they were utilized to advantage in hunting the scattered buffaloes and other game animals wintering in the valley; and in later years, James Bridger became so affiliated with the Snakes that he took a Snake woman for his third wife. The Snakes were assiduous medicine makers, having a large medicine lodge, or religious tabernacle, in which both Indians and whites whiled away much of the time, having their futures read by the medicine man or high-priest.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SALT LAKE RENDEZVOUS

THE trappers usually reached the Salt Lake rendezvous over the rather circuitous but easy Bear River route. Provot entered the valley by way of the Weber River in 1824, but the direct Echo Canyon route now used by the Union Pacific railway contained no fur-bearing waters and no interest to the trappers, though on later expeditions where serving as guide, Bridger displayed an intimate knowledge of the topography in this, and many other out-of-the-way places.

The Willow or Cache valley stopping places and cache sites were most probably in the mouth of Logan River canyon, along the Little Bear River valley in the extreme southern part of Cache valley, and particularly on Blacksmith's Fork River near the mouth of the canyon, as this stream remains open longest and affords excellent encampment sites. Indeed, tradition locates the only known cache on this stream, though both Logan River and the Little Bear answer the general descriptions of the cache sites very well.

Thus, instead of journeying along the lower Bear River to the Salt Lake rendezvous, the trappers' usual route was directly south from the mouth of Blacksmith's Fork Canyon, over a well used Indian lodge pole trail into Ogden Valley (or Ogden Hole as it came to be known in later years from having been frequented by Peter Skene Ogden of the Hudson's Bay Company), and thence about ten miles westerly through Eden Canyon (not Ogden canyon) to the Salt Lake rendezvous. Ogden Hole, or Valley, is a pleasant and sheltered place, convenient for the assembling of trapping parties, and particularly for wintering livestock in favorable winters; but the climate is more severe, and the snow deeper, hence its rejection in favor of the sheltered alcove just north of the present site of Ogden City.

This latter locality was not only the winter sanctuary for Provot and his men in the winter of 1824-1825, and the assembled Ashley trappers during the winter of 1825-1826, but was obviously the site of the summer trading rendezvous of 1826, when General Ashley made his last, and his most westerly journey to the Rocky Mountains. This was the only visit the General made to the vicinity of Great Salt Lake. On the occasion of the General's visit, also during the previous winter, and probably during the following autumn, important improvements were made in this trading fort.

The spring and summer of 1826 was an eventful and active period with the Ashley trappers. An early dispersion of the fur gatherers was effected, the fur country being intensively and extensively covered as it had not been theretofore for want of numbers and acquaintance with the country. The principal leaders, including Thomas Fitzpatrick and James Bridger, the former being now nominally in charge of all parties, after seeing the various brigades on their way as the snow began to soften, hastened to Willow Valley with a small band of men to inspect, move and recache the seventy-five bales of valuable furs left there the previous autumn.

Robert Campbell, Louis Vasquez, David E. Jackson, and other brigade leaders set forth under Fitzpatrick's general instructions to trap, while four men, nameless unfortunately in history, were assigned the duty of exploring Great Salt Lake; and another party, also nameless, it is greatly to be regretted, seems to have been sent far northward into the Blackfoot country. This party visited and made the first written report on the Yellowstone Park natural phenomena, and the continental divide in the vicinity of Two Ocean Pass.

The explorers of Great Salt Lake outfitted themselves with bull boats and embarked, probably floating down the river direct from the Salt Lake rendezvous. For more than three weeks these primitive navigators rowed slowly around the lake near the shore, in quest of beaver-bearing streams, and also of the outlet of the lake. Fresh water inlets are comparatively scarce, especially along the bar-

ren westerly shore, and consequently the trapper explorers suffered intensely at times for drinking water; they also experienced a shortage of game for food. They had obviously started around by way of the south end of the lake, and found streams and game animals and birds plentiful at first; but they suddenly met with grief and want on the westerly shores.

They reached the mouth of Bear River, most likely by portaging across the base of Promontory Point. They journeyed thence to the Willow Valley encampment, probably directly over the hills, where the leaders were temporarily sojourning. The explorers had a sort of negative report to make, since no new beaver-bearing streams were found; though the report was of positive value to every one concerned. No one else needed to, nor did, venture onto the lake until General John C. Fremont came twenty years later. The lake has no outlet, but the explorers naively reported that they found the place where it was supposed to be.

The examination and re-caching of the fur packs in Cache Valley (as Willow Valley became known from that spring) was no ordinary task; for while there was ample assistance, there was also a large number of camp-trailing Indians from whom the furs were to be concealed. The Snakes were overfriendly, the Bannocks were distrusted, and the hostile Blackfoot infested the country generally, all of which tribes knew the value of a fur pack. Thus the transfer of the caches was to be a skillful piece of workmanship.

The cache is a hiding place, taking its name from the French Canadian trappers; it is a rather elaborate affair where many goods and supplies are to be concealed safely against the sharp eyes of the Indians and the keen scent of wild beasts. Small caches have often been made in rock caves, and even in the dense foliage of large trees; but the trappers' cache of furs and merchandise was usually a cave or cavern dug into the virgin soil, the outward evidences of which were entirely concealed or removed.

The sod is removed from a small space in the ground,

which turf becomes the top or cork for the cavity. This sod patch is preserved, and all the earth excavated is carefully deposited on blankets or skins, and carried to the stream for effectual disposal in the current. The size and shape of the cavern will vary with the amount of goods to be hidden; and the extent of the lining of brush, leaves, bark, grass and dry hides for the interior will vary with the character of the goods to be stored. Usually, however, the cellar-like place must be kept dry at any hazard.

The soil is tamped back into the bottle neck opening, and the disc of sod replaced. Then the region is carefully watered to destroy the scent of the workers. A general cache will thus consist of a number of such pits in the same locality, the site selected being one least likely to be suspected by thieves. The caches in Cache valley were dug in a bank, according to Beckwourth, who adds that two Canadian trappers were killed when the bank caved in on them.

The Snake Indians accompanying the trappers buried the dead men with full ceremony, the burial places being in lofty trees. The bodies were wrapped tightly with blankets and thongs, within which were placed the guns, knives, pipes, tobacco and other articles belonging to the deceased. Beckwourth says had they been warriors their horses would have been killed and buried, with the saddles and other valuables at the foot of the trees. The narrator also mentions the accidental death of an artful but unwise young Indian, who fitted himself out with horns and other disguises to decoy an antelope near, but was himself taken for an antelope and killed by a trapper.

The loss of the Canadian trappers in the caving bank proved a sort of windfall to Beckwourth, who says he obtained the privilege of taking one of the young widows as a servant. This merry young widow was of course a squaw, but "she was of light complexion, smart, trim and active," Beckwourth divulges, "and never tired in her efforts to please me, she seeming to think that she belonged to me for the remainder of her life. I had never had a servant before, and I found her of great service to

me in keeping my clothes in repair, making my bed, and taking care of my weapons."

Reaching the Portneuf River, the trappers and Indians found a fertile beaver region, which they worked all the way down to the outlet in the Snake River. They also found a hornet's nest of hostile Indians awaiting them, whom they stalled off temporarily, placing a heavy guard about camp at night. Early on the morrow, however, three tether ropes were slyly cut and as many of the trappers' steeds driven away by the enemy. Retribution overtook them speedily, however, in the form of six deaths, and five scalps lost, the sixth going down the Snake River on the dying Indian who tumbled in still wearing it. Wisdom then bade the trappers return up the Portneuf.

Shortly after this episode a brigade leader named Logan led twelve men out on a trapping detour, but never returned. A general search for him was fruitless; and it was assumed the Blackfoot Indians had played a better hand against them than against the entire body of trappers.

The main party, led by Fitzpatrick and Bridger, proceeded to the Bear River, trapping up that stream to the Sage River, in Wyoming east of Bear Lake. Here they met up with Moses (Black) Harris, and Beckwourth's old friend Portuleuse, being an advance scouting party for General Ashley and William Sublette, who were but a short way in the rear.

Fitzpatrick and party at once returned by way of the Bear, to the Salt Lake rendezvous, lifting the caches in Cache valley on the way. General Ashley, accompanied by a large body of men, bringing an immense amount of merchandise on three hundred pack mules, wended his way leisurely, reaching the rendezvous several days later. While awaiting Ashley at the rendezvous, Fitzpatrick was informed by some Indian scouts that thirty white men, without ammunition, were marooned about fifteen miles distant, who might be in need. Their location was probably near the present site of Farmington, Utah.

Etienne Provot, Jean Baptiste Gervais, and James



JAMES P. BECKWOURTH, mulatto trapper, hunter and adopted Crow Indian Chief. Trapped fur and fought Indians with James Bridger. (33)

Beckwourth were allowed to deliver the ammunition to the mountaineers, whom they found to be Robert Campbell, and others of their own trappers, well laden with furs and on the way back to the rendezvous with their packs. Beckwourth says they all began the northward journey to Ogden River on the morrow but were driven precipitately by a band of Blackfoot Indians which suddenly appeared in their rear.

There were a great many women and children in the party, these being dispatched ahead to a grove of willows about six miles distant, while the trappers kept up a running fight, losing one man, an old trapper, on the way. The Indians sought hard to surround the trappers, but failed because of the lake on one side and the mountains on the other, the plain between being narrow at this point.

Having gained the willows, a desperate fight was made by the trappers, who conserved their ammunition, bringing down an Indian with almost every shot. When their ammunition began to run low, sixteen of the trappers decided on a charge against the foe, expecting a stampede, but this failed and they were lucky to return with their own scalps. It was then decided by Campbell that couriers should break out to the north in spite of the Indians being virtually around them, and apprise the trappers at the rendezvous of their predicament.

Disguised as Indians, Beckwourth and Calhoun ran the gauntlet and got away over the sand ridges to the north. On nearing the Weber River they met trappers coming to their aid, and these, together with every other trapper available, sped to the willow patch. Their presence served to rout the Blackfoot warriors, who fled southward. Beckwourth reports the casualties at four trappers killed and seven wounded, and seventeen Blackfoot scalps, mostly obtained near the willows. More than a hundred Indians were slain, but their bodies had been carried away by their retreating fellows.

The savagery of even a trapping party, made up largely of halfbreeds, squaw men, and Indian women and children, is shown in the scalp dance indulged in at the

rendezvous on the arrival of the victors. The Snake Indians to the number of about four thousand arrived in readiness for the rendezvous, but instantly fell into the celebration of the scalp dance against their old enemies. Bemoaning the fact that they could not have been present at the battle, the Snakes contributed greatly to the hilarity, making a wild scene.

The exultations of the scalp dancers had scarcely died away when General Ashley and party arrived from St. Louis freighted with luxuries, supplies, and "medicine water," thus transforming the celebration into one in which all could participate without restraint or prejudice. Songs, dancing, shouting, trading, running, jumping, racing, target shooting, yarns and frolic, with all sorts of extravagances, are enumerated in this order by Beckwourth, as being the manifestations of the enjoyment of the people assembled.

As if there was no limit to the excitement, the general celebration had scarcely begun to wane on the second day after General Ashley's arrival, when the bested Blackfoot Indians reappeared in greatly increased numbers, killing three Snake Indian men and two women near the rendezvous. The Snake chief pleaded with Captain Sublette to assist his braves in punishing the Blackfoot horde, which Sublette instantly consented to, martialing more than three hundred trappers in a few minutes.

Wedging themselves in a hollow of the mountains a few miles distant, probably the mouth of Weber canyon, the Blackfeet confronted Sublette and his trappers most formidably. After six hours of desperate fighting, the trappers withdrew for food, inviting the Snakes to take the battle front; but the Snakes were hungering only for personal nourishment and also withdrew. When the trappers returned, the foes had disappeared, leaving as trophies one hundred and seventy-three warriors with scalps for the trappers, besides much war material. Several trappers were wounded, but none killed; while the Snakes lost eleven killed.

This victory was the occasion for a further and most inordinate celebration of the scalp dance, lasting some

days. General Ashley, who had remained in camp in charge of a small detachment of trappers to guard the merchandise, had meanwhile been busily engaged with his business, completing not only his exchanges of merchandise for fur, but selling out his entire interests in the mountains to his associates, Messrs. William L. Sublette, Jedediah S. Smith, and David E. Jackson.

Sublette and Smith had accompanied Ashley from St. Louis, having evidently arranged the general terms of the sale of the business, which required only the aid of another partner. This partner was found in Jackson. Ashley's sale, and the articles of agreement, were signed on July 26, 1826, "near the Grand [Salt] Lake west of the Rocky Mountains," Robert Campbell signing as the only witness.

General Ashley has very often been credited with visiting Utah Lake (Timpanōgos), even establishing a fort there; and some authorities have said he went as far as Sevier Lake in southwestern Utah; but Dale (4) has nullified all such claims by presenting papers showing beyond the slightest doubt that General Ashley went no farther than the Salt Lake rendezvous on Ogden River, from which place he returned to St. Louis by way of the Platte River. Incidentally Dale has similarly transferred from Provo City to Ogden City the interesting incident of Utah history about the cannon, being the first wheeled vehicle on the overland trail, which General Ashley sent to the mountains in 1827 (not 1826) for his successors.

Ashley's decision to quit the fur trade, confining himself thereafter to furnishing the new company with merchandise, was the source of some regret to James Bridger, who had been sent to the mountains by the General, and who had prospered well under the General's management of the business. But Bridger's original contract had expired, and he had prospered as an independent operator thereafter; hence it was only a sense of leadership he seemed to be losing, as the General stood before the trappers at the rendezvous and thanked them for their support and bade them good-bye in the following language: (13)

"Mountaineers and friends! When I first came to the mountains, I came a poor man. You, by your indefatigable exertions, toils and privations have procured me an independent fortune. With ordinary prudence in the management of what I have accumulated, I shall never want for anything. For this, my friends, I feel myself under great obligations to you. Many of you have served with me personally, and I shall always be proud to testify to the fidelity with which you have stood by me through all danger, and the friendly and brotherly feeling which you have ever, one and all, evinced toward me. For these faithful and devoted services I wish you to accept my thanks; the gratitude that I express to you springs from my heart, and will ever retain a lively hold on my feelings.

"My friends! I am now about to leave you, to take up my abode in St. Louis. Whenever any of you return thither, your first duty must be to call at my house, to talk over the scenes of peril we have encountered, and partake of the best cheer my table can afford you.

"I now wash my hands of the toils of the Rocky Mountains. Farewell mountaineers and friends! May God bless you all!"

"September 28, 1826. General Ashley and his party have arrived at St. Louis from the Rocky Mountains with one hundred and twenty-five packs of beaver, valued at \$60,000" (92).

CHAPTER XIV

TRAVELING AND FIGHTING

JAMES BRIDGER remained with the new firm, being closely associated with the management as were Thomas Fitzpatrick, Etienne Provot, and a few other leading figures. Jedediah S. Smith, whose name appeared first in the new partnership, selected a force of men, largely from the new recruits, and turned his face toward the Pacific. The interior southwest had not been explored extensively for beaver; and Smith had inherited from General Ashley a desire to ascertain whether a water route to the fur market could be obtained in that direction. Departing from the Salt Lake rendezvous on August 26, 1826, Smith visited the southern California towns, returning to the rendezvous in mid-July, 1827.

Sublette and the main body of trappers left the rendezvous much earlier, about the time of General Ashley's departure, before the end of July, 1826. Sublette also had a new idea; having on hand much merchandise, and there being no trapping possible for some months to come, he journeyed to the Snake River country, for trade with the Blackfoot and Flathead Indians. These nations happened to be at peace temporarily and were thus possessed of much fur and many horses which the trappers needed. Sublette even sent Beckwourth and two others into Montana among the Blackfoot tribes, on Beaver River, for trading. Beckwourth obtained thirty-nine packs of furs and much adventure, including two more wives, on this expedition, which lasted but three weeks.

Shortly after Beckwourth's return to the Snake River rendezvous, forty-four Blackfoot Indians were detected stealing the trappers' horses. Being pursued the Indians sought shelter in a thicket of dry brush, which was fired, causing the frightened Indians to file out one by one and be killed, according to the bloodthirsty Beckwourth. The

party then moved over to what they called Lewis' Fork, toward the Green River.

Beckwourth drifted into the wilds alone one afternoon, and heard a beaver, presumably over a ledge; but on peering over saw an Indian standing nude on his blanket ridding himself of vermin. Beckwourth admits seeing only the gun, robe and a scalp, and mercilessly took all. The result was an invasion of the camp the following morning by two thousand five hundred Blackfoot warriors; and as Beckwourth says, "We now had something on our hands which demanded attention."

The Indians charged violently, but the trappers stood their ground, having placed the women and children in the rear upstream between the timber and the stream. Permitting them to exhaust themselves in charging for some time, the trappers then ordered four hundred horses saddled by the women, and Beckwourth with one hundred and thirty men detoured through the forest intending to attack the Indians from the rear. Beckwourth, not to omit an item of interest, came upon ten Indians resting from the fight, and killed nine of them. He also succeeded in closing in on the main party of attacking Indians from the rear, and with Sublette's aid routed them. The Indians left one hundred sixty-seven dead on the field, and the trappers sixteen, with fifty or sixty wounded.

When the wounded were able to move, the trappers passed over to Salt River at a point a mile above the Snake. Beckwourth says he and two others were scouting ahead, encamping alone away from the main party. Two of them were rudely awakened by rifle shots which killed a comrade and a horse; and five hundred Indians came storming their little stronghold, which had been instantly constructed of the dead bodies of the trapper and his horse. The siege continued until seventeen Indians had bitten the dust; and at this time, the gun shots having been heard at the main camp, sixty men came rushing to the rescue and the Indians departed.

The next evening a party of friendly Snakes called, and invited the trappers to move camp to their village, five miles up the river, and do some trading; and after

some parleying the invitation was accepted. It developed that an immense village of Bannocks were encamped near the Snakes, who were in disrepute with the trappers. Captain Sublette warned the Bannocks through an intermediary that no nonsense would be tolerated; but very soon after the trappers' arrival near the Snakes, the Bannocks killed a Snake and wounded two of the trappers.

Sublette called for volunteers to punish the Bannocks, and two hundred and fifteen trappers presented themselves. James Bridger was appointed captain of the troop, and descended with them toward the Bannocks' village, only to find they had disappeared. The trail was followed some forty-five miles, Bridger and his men finally overtaking the Indians on Green River. Seeing the approach of the trappers, the Indians established themselves on a small island in the stream.

"What shall we do now, Jim?" Beckwourth says Bridger asked him.

"I will cross to the other side with one-half of the men," Beckwourth suggested, "and get abreast of the island. Their retreat will be thus cut off, and we can exterminate them in their trap."

"Go," said Bridger. "I will take them if they attempt to make this shore."

"I was soon in position," says Beckwourth, who usually manages to get in the most conspicuous position, "and the enflaming commenced, and was continued until there was not one left of either sex or any age. We carried back four hundred and eighty-eight scalps, and, as we then supposed, annihilated the Pun-nak (Bannock) band. On our return, however, we found six or eight of their squaws, who had been left behind in the fight, whom we carried back and gave to the Snakes."

"On our informing the Snakes of what had taken place, they expressed great delight. 'Right!' they said. 'Pun-naks very bad Indians,' " and they joined in the scalp dance.

"We afterward learned that the Pun-naks, when they fled from our vengeance, had previously sent their old men, and a great portion of their women and children, to the mountains, at which we were greatly pleased, as it spared the effusion of much unnecessary blood. They had a great medicine chief slain with the others on the island; his *medicine* was not good this time at least."

Of course Beckwourth may have recited this tale so often he could not forget its details, though since he was dictating it to Bonner in 1855, his memory for figures is

suspiciously precise. His propensity for prevarication, through the operation of his imagination, is well known. Yet some remarkable adventures, known to his associates, have been omitted from his autobiography, presumably due to modesty. Moreover, Beckwourth has never misstated a name nor an occurrence in the scores of episodes mentioned, so far as major details are concerned, corroborating other and more trusted authorities in many instances. For this reason Beckwourth's own narrative probably tinctures more western writings, with credit and without, than any other narrative of equal length.

"We proceeded thence to a small creek, called Black Foot Creek, in the heart of the Black Foot country," continues Beckwourth.

"It was always our custom, before turning out our horses in the morning, to send out spies to reconnoitre around, and see if any Indians were lurking about to steal them. When preparing to move one morning from the last-named creek, we sent out two men, but they had not proceeded twenty yards from our corral before a dozen shots were fired at them by a party of Black Feet, bringing them from their horses severely wounded. In a moment the whole camp was in motion. The savages made a bold and desperate attempt to rush upon the wounded men and get their scalps, but we were on the ground in time to prevent them, and drove them back, killing four of their number.

"The next day we were overtaken by the Snakes, who, hearing of our skirmish, expressed great regret that they were not present to have followed them and given them battle again. We seldom followed the Indians after having defeated them, unless they had stolen our horses. It was our policy always to act on the defensive, even to tribes that were known enemies.

"When the Snakes were ready we all moved on together for the head of Green River. The Indians numbered six or seven thousand, including women and children; our number was nearly eight hundred altogether, forming quite a formidable little army, or, more properly, a moving city. The number of horses belonging to the whole camp was immense."

Of course, it may be worth remarking, the Indians were the stragglers in this advancing army, bringing up the rear, and pitching their camp, and ranging their animals in places designated by the captain, William L. Sublette, through his lieutenants and other aides. The Ashley men had gained much valuable experience in pack

train movement through hostile Indian territory; and such a march became as orderly as the movement of trained military troops.

Under the aides, the men were divided into messes or companies of eight or ten men each, with a man at the head of the mess whose duty it was to order, receive and distribute all manner of supplies, and to have surveillance of their conduct and general activities. Every article in the equipment for each man or for his horses was charged to him in a book of records; and every change in personnel from day to day was reported to the captain.

The encampment was usually laid out in the form of a rectangle, a stream forming one side of the square where possible. The enclosure was large enough to allow for the ranging of all the horses, each tethered on a fifteen-foot tie rope. On arrival at a selected camp site, which had usually been sought by scouting parties ahead, the captain settled himself, and indicated the position for the various messes. The saddles and baggage were stacked to form a barricade in case of an Indian attack. The horses were grazed in a herd by herders until dusk, when they were brought within the camp corral for the night.

The entire countryside was searched by men on horseback morning and night for dangerous Indians, before retiring, and before departing from the corral in the morning. The horses grazed in a herd again outside the enclosure during the breakfast hour; and on the receipt of orders to move, each mess fell into the line of march in the order in which they got themselves ready, this position being maintained through the day. Guards in the rear, as well as on each flank and far ahead, kept the captain advised of suspicious objects or movements.

The horses consisted only of sufficient animals to transport the men and the furs and merchandise, together with the women and children when such were in attendance. Often when heavily freighted large herds of pack mules or horses were necessary, these being led through difficult or dangerous country, and driven in safe regions.

The trapper requires one horse to ride and one for his traps, camp equipment and furs. While furs are being taken, the trapper delivers his beaver to the clerk of the camp each evening for credit; and the camp-keepers take charge of the skins to dry and pack them.

Efficient service and strict obedience were required of every trapper. The guns were always kept in perfect order, and were often inspected carefully; but a gun was never discharged in camp on any provocation short of an Indian fight. There was a very effective practice followed in most trapper bodies, of having camp activities and duties reviewed periodically and at odd times; and if a crude piece of work was found, whether it was trap repairing, halter making, gun cleaning or knife sharpening, a neighbor was asked to do it, and a credit transferred from the delinquent trapper to the more efficient one, of from one to ten dollars, on the company's books.

CHAPTER XV

ANOTHER WINTER AT THE SALT LAKE RENDEZVOUS

THE autumn of 1826 was well advanced and the fur trapping season was on by the time the trappers and Indians reached the upper Green River. Moreover, their vast number of horses soon depleted the pasturage. While the trapping territory was being assigned, visits were received from a few friendly Crows, of the Powder River country east of the Rockies, who invited the trappers to send traders among them again.

Incidentally one of the trappers told a fanciful tale of Beckwourth's ancestry, which was ingeniously traced to the Crows themselves, and which was, strangely enough, believed by them. He was supposed to have been an infant in the arms of a Crow woman taken captive by enemies, the son being rescued by white men when he reached the age of usefulness. This tale becomes the vehicle on which the resourceful Beckwourth is soon to be carried from our sight.

Captain Sublette sent detachments out in all directions, under competent leaders, with instructions to return to the Green River region, or to the Salt Lake rendezvous by a specified date. Parties going into hostile Indian areas were enlarged, while those going into friendly regions were made smaller. Each trapper was cautioned to regard the word of his leader as the supreme law. Many of the men, employed as camp tenders and assistants, were recruited from among the free trappers, though several free trappers also went forth from this point of dispersion.

James Bridger became second in command, under Captain Robert Campbell, of a party of thirty-one trappers assigned to the Powder River, whence they probably journeyed directly over the crest of the continent and across the Wind River country. The season was at its height and they busied themselves at once on the various

branches of this stream, working downward into the Crow Indian country.

James Beckwourth, also in this detachment, relates an interesting episode which occurred soon after the arrival of the party on the Powder. "I had set my six traps over night, and on going to them the following morning I found four beavers, but one of my traps was missing. I sought it in every direction, but without success, and on my return to camp mentioned the mystery. Captain Bridger (as skillful a hunter as ever lived in the mountains) offered to renew the search with me, expressing confidence that the trap could be found. We searched diligently along the river and the bank for a considerable distance, but the trap was among the missing. The float-pole also was gone—a pole ten or twelve feet long and four inches thick. We at length gave it up as lost.

"The next morning the whole party moved farther up the river. To shorten our route, Bridger and myself crossed the stream at the spot where I had set my missing trap. It was a buffalo-crossing, and there was a good trail worn in the banks, so that we could easily cross with our horses. After passing and traveling on some two miles, I discovered what I supposed to be a badger, and we both made a rush for him. On closer inspection, however, it proved to be my beaver, with trap, chain, and float-pole. It was apparent that some buffalo, in crossing the river, had become entangled in the chain, and, as we conceived, had carried the trap on his shoulder, with the beaver pendant on one side and the pole on the other. We inferred that he had in some way got his head under the chain, between the trap and the pole, and in his endeavors to extricate himself, had pushed his head through. The hump on his back would prevent it passing over his body, and away he would speed with his burden, probably urged forward by the four sharp teeth of the beaver, which would doubtless object to his sudden equestrian (or rather bovine) journey. We killed the beaver and took his skin, feeling much satisfaction at the solution of the mystery. . . .

"That same evening Captain Bridger and myself started out with our traps, intending to be gone three or four days," the Beckwourth narrative continues. "We followed up a small stream until it forked, when Bridger proposed that I should take one fork and he the other, and the one who had set his traps first should cross the hill which separated the two streams and rejoin the other. Thus we parted, expecting to meet again in a few hours. I continued my course up the stream in pursuit of beaver villages until I found myself among an innumerable drove of horses, and I could plainly see they were not wild ones.

"The horses were guarded by several of their Indian owners, or horse-guards, as they term them, who had discovered me long

before I saw them. I could hear their signals to each other, and in a few moments I was surrounded by them, and escape was impossible. I resigned myself to my fate: if they were enemies, I knew they could kill me but once, and to attempt to defend myself would entail inevitable death. I took the chances between death and mercy; I surrendered my gun, traps, and what else I had, and was marched to camp under a strong escort of horse-guards. I felt very sure that my guards were Crows, therefore I did not feel greatly alarmed at my situation. On arriving at their village I was ushered into the chief's lodge, where there were several old men and women whom I conceived to be members of the family. My capture was known throughout the village in five minutes, and hundreds gathered around the lodge to get a sight of the prisoner. In the crowd were some who had talked to Greenwood a few weeks before. They at once exclaimed, 'That is the lost Crow, the great brave who has killed so many of our enemies. He is our brother.'

"This threw the whole village into commotion; old and young were impatient to obtain a sight of the 'great brave.' Orders were immediately given to summon all the old women taken by the Shi-ans at the time of their captivity so many winters past, who had suffered the loss of a son at that time. The lodge was cleared for the examining committee, and the old women, breathless with excitement, their eyes wild and protruding, and their nostrils dilated, arrived in squads, until the lodge was filled to overflowing. I believe never was mortal gazed at with intense and sustained interest as I was on that occasion. Arms and legs were critically scrutinized. My face next passed the ordeal; then my neck, back, breast, and all parts of my body, even down to my feet, which did not escape the examination of these anxious matrons, in their endeavors to discover some mark or peculiarity whereby to recognize their brave son.

"At length one old woman, after having scanned my visage with the utmost intentness, came forward and said, 'If this is my son, he has a mole over one of his eyes.'

"My eyelids were immediately pulled down to the utmost stretch of their elasticity, when, sure enough, she discovered a mole just over my left eye!

"Then, and oh then, such shouts of joy as were uttered by that honest hearted woman were seldom before heard, while all in the crowd took part in her rejoicing. It was uncultivated joy, but not the less heartfelt and intense. It was a joy which a mother can only experience when she recovers a son whom she has supposed dead in his earliest days. She had mourned him silently through weary nights and busy days for the long space of twenty years; suddenly he presents himself before her in robust manhood, and graced with the highest name an Indian can appreciate. It is but nature, either in the savage breast or civilized, that hails such a

return with overwhelming joy, and feels the mother's undying affection awakened beyond all control."

Thus does Beckwourth make the world revolve around himself while he is hugged and kissed back into the Crow fold, or the Crow's nest may we say, permitting all this mistaken identity to gain for him the place he really coveted. That his real mother was a quadroon and his father a southern planter did not affect the situation; nor that he had several wives elsewhere among the Indians, and a betrothed lady, color not stated, back in St. Louis. He is given the finest squaw in the lot and is married in stately fashion, receiving a herd of horses as a wedding present. He was in fact "welcomed nearly to death," he says; but incidentally had a "heartly laugh, when they had gone forth to spread their tale of wonderment," because he had been so well entertained through "the inordinate gullibility of the red man." Thus Beckwourth became, and for several years remained, an actual Crow Indian to all appearances.

Withdrawing from this last of the glamorous Beckwourth tales, in which Bridger is a participant, we find James Bridger standing sheltered among the pines on the ridge, gazing steadfastly upon the scene as his trapper comrade, Beckwourth, is stealthily taken captive by Indians, whom he supposes are enemy Cheyennes, and who take their prey to their village across the valley for final torture and annihilation. Bridger returns to his companions and they mourn the loss of Beckwourth, and gather up his remaining traps as the last of his belongings, and move to other waters.

Having a wholesome fear lest some such calamity befall the entire party, in enemy country, Campbell decided to leave the Powder River drainage, and thus they passed over to the headwaters of the Yellowstone, probably by way of the Yellowstone River from the neighborhood of the Big Horn junction. Carrying out Sublette's aims, Campbell traded extensively with Indians encountered, in addition to trapping industriously, on the way up the Yellowstone.

Just how this party reached the Green River country,

if at all, or the rendezvous in the Salt Lake valley finally, is not known. They must have passed very near, if not through, the Yellowstone Park region again if they went to the very head of the river of that name, though since the season was late by that time, it is probable that they passed around the park to the north and west as weather conditions and snow cover allowed.

The Salt Lake rendezvous, as the junction of the Weber and Ogden rivers was still known, must have gradually accumulated structures of wood and earth for use as domiciles and storehouses. But when Smith, Jackson and Sublette succeeded General Ashley, their numbers were increased, their stock of merchandise to be kept in the mountains greatly increased, and they had, during their first summer as proprietors, many difficulties with hostile Indian tribes. Thus the construction of a trader's fort, with cabins of logs for the trappers, or at least most of them, including a warehouse or storage, all within a stockade, seemed quite necessary. There is, however, no known description or diagram of this fort.

Winter in the Salt Lake valley thus found the organized trappers comfortably and securely established within a so-called fort, while the usual quota of Indians and free trappers were nestled roundabout outside the stockade. The vague tradition that this post was erected on Utah Lake (Little Uta, or Timpanogos, as the lake was called) has been perpetuated after a manner, due no doubt to the name Timpanogos, having first been applied to Great Salt Lake and later to Utah Lake.

Winter camp life is described by Joseph L. Meek (19) about as follows. There are usually six persons to a lodge or cabin, four trappers and two camp-keepers; therefore the trappers are well waited upon, their only duty being to hunt, in turns, for the camp. When a piece of game is brought in, a deer, an antelope, or a buffalo, it is thrown on the heap of game before the Captain's door. The Captain's principal lieutenant supervises the cutting of the meat, the first passer being ordered to act as dispenser.

The dispenser of the meat stands with his back toward

the game pile, and when a cut is made, the lieutenant asks who gets it, the dispenser calls out the number of the mess to receive the piece. In this impartial way no favorites are shown, the captains themselves taking a chance with the rest. Even if a hunter should secure some extra fine provisions, such as wild game birds, he must on his honor deposit them with the game pool, and take his chance with the rest of the men.

The spring trapping expeditions of 1827 carried the Salt Lake trappers generally over the same rich fur country west of the Rockies; and it is known that James Bridger continued his connection with his former associates, though the particulars of these expeditions are not available. Bridger was on hand again, however, at the summer trading rendezvous, which Sublette maintained at its high state of importance.

General Ashley, in accordance with his agreement, outfitted the 1827 supply train at St. Louis, and accompanied it as far as the Plains, but was there forced to turn back on account of sickness. "In the month of March, 1827," Ashley writes (4), "I fitted out a party of sixty men, mounted a piece of artillery (a four-pounder) on a carriage which was drawn by two mules; the party marched to or near the Grand Salt Lake, beyond the Rocky Mountains, remained there one month, stopped on their way back fifteen days, and returned to Lexington in the western part of Missouri in September, where the party was met with everything necessary for another expedition, and did return (using the same horses and mules) to the mountains by the last of November in the same year."

The cannon mentioned was evidently purchased on Sublette's orders, and was taken to the fort at the Salt Lake rendezvous, where in all probability it was placed in position on a platform within the post for the protection of the people and property at that point. The trading supplies were doubtless left at Bear Lake (near the present town of Laketown at the south end of the lake), where it had been decided to hold the summer rendezvous that year.

It was at this rendezvous the letter previously mentioned describing a visit to the Yellowstone Park country was written, presumably by a member of one of the parties trapping out of the Salt Lake rendezvous in the summer and autumn of 1826. There has been a disposition to believe that this historic journey was made in the spring of 1827; but this is hardly probable, since the snow does not usually leave those elevations until late in June, and the streams continue high and the soils soft until well into July as a rule. For these reasons it seems certain that a journey requiring as much time as the examination of Two Ocean Pass and the Yellowstone Lake regions could have been made only in the summer and autumn.

The following letter, appearing in the *Niles Register*, a newspaper, dated October 6, 1827, forms the first known printed description of the Yellowstone Park phenomena. It was published without signature, and the writer's identity is still unknown. Much has been written about the discoveries of James Bridger in the Yellowstone, and there is some reason to give credence to the report previously referred to herein that he saw Yellowstone Lake and adjacent features in 1825: but Bridger could not write and was probably not with this particular party, hence the letter was not his.

FROM THE WEST

SWEET LAKE (Bear Lake) July 8, 1827.

"Shortly after writing to you last year I took my departure for the Black Foot country much against my will, but I could not make a party for any other route. We took a northerly direction about fifty miles, where we crossed Snake River, or the south fork of Columbia, at the forks of Henry's and Lewis's; at this place we were daily harassed by the Blackfeet; from thence we went up Henry's or north fork, which bears north of east thirty miles, and crossed a large rugged mountain which separates the two forks (the Teton Mountains); from thence east up the other fork (the Snake) to its source, which heads on the top of the great chain of Rocky Mountains which separates the waters of the Atlantic from those of the Pacific. At or near this place heads the Luchka-dee or California (Seeds-kee-dee, or Green River), Sticking (sic) (Stinking or Shoshone) fork, Yellow Stone south fork of Maswri (sic) (Missouri?) and Henry's fork, all those head at one angular point: that of the Yellow Stone has a large fresh water lake near

its head on the very top of the mountain, which is about one hundred by forty miles in diameter, and as clear as crystal. On the south border of this lake is a number of hot and boiling springs, some of water and other of most beautiful fine clay, resembling a mush pot, and throwing particles to the immense height of from twenty to thirty feet. The clay is of a white, and of a pink color, and the water appears fathomless, as it appears to be entirely hollow underneath. There is also a number of places where pure sulphur is sent forth in abundance. One of our men visited one of these whilst taking his recreation—there at an instant the earth began a tremendous trembling, and he with difficulty made his escape, when an explosion took place resembling that of thunder. During our stay in that quarter I heard it every day. From this place, by a circuitous route to the northwest, we returned. Two others and myself pushed on in advance for the purpose of accumulating a few more beaver, and in the act of passing through a narrow confine in the mountain, we were met plump in the face by a large party of Blackfeet Indians, who, not knowing our number, fled into the mountain in confusion. We retired to a small grove of willows; here we made every preparation for a battle—after which finding our enemy as much alarmed as ourselves, we mounted our horses, which were heavily loaded, and took the back retreat. The Indians raised a tremendous yell, showered down from the mountain top and almost cut off our retreat. We here put whip to our horses and they pursued us in close quarters until we reached the plains, when we left them behind. On this trip one man was closely fired on by a party of Blackfeet; several others were closely pursued.

“On this trip I lost one horse by accident, and the last spring two by the Utaws, who killed three for the purpose of eating them, one of which was a favorite buffaloe horse. This loss cannot be computed at less than four hundred and fifty dollars. A few days previous to my arrival at this place a party of about 120 Blackfeet approached the camp and killed a Snake Indian and his squaw. The alarm was immediately given and the Snakes, Utaws and whites sallied forth for battle—the enemy fled to the mountain to a small concavity thickly grown with small timber surrounded by open ground. In this engagement the squaws were busily engaged in throwing batteries and dragging off the dead. There were only six whites engaged in the battle, who immediately advanced within pistol shot and you may be assured that almost every shot counted one. The loss of the Snakes was three killed and the same number wounded; that of the whites, one wounded and two narrowly made their escape; that of the Utaws was none, though they gained great applause for their bravery. The loss of the enemy is not known—six were found dead on the ground; a great number besides were carried off on horses. Tomorrow, I depart for the west.—PHIL. GAZ.”

CHAPTER XVI

PETER SKENE OGDEN AND THE AMERICANS

THE fur caravan out of the Bear Lake trading rendezvous late in July, 1827, was laden with one hundred and thirty packs of fur worth a fortune to General Ashley, who met the caravan as indicated in his brief letter previously quoted. The return of the caravan to the mountains after exchanging the burden of fur for one of mountain merchandise, however, was a very arduous experience as the winter became severe and the party was snowbound somewhere in the mountains, being forced to await the spring time before completing their journey.

Jedediah S. Smith had returned from California in time to attend the Bear Lake rendezvous, from which point he made his report by letter to the government Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Smith re-outfitted himself promptly, however, and turned coastward again, remaining away another year. Sublette's several brigades of trappers evidently pushed the trapping business with all their ability during the autumn of 1827, throughout the whole fur territory west of the continental divide. Peter Skene Ogden, at the head of a party of Hudson's Bay Company trappers, came into the Snake River country from Fort Vancouver, and seems to have found the "Americans" omnipresent, and doing a very thorough job of trapping. It will be of interest to look in on the situation briefly through Ogden's eyes, as recorded in a few extracts from his interesting journal (12).

"September 25, 1827 [on the Snake not far above the Weiser River below Boise]. Trappers report traps of strangers set along this river. Shortly after, an American by name of Johnson appeared and informed us he and five others were on this stream. Their party consists of forty men with a band of Nez Perces working in the direction Mr. McKay has taken. My sanguine hopes of beaver here are blasted. I shall send Sylvaille with five men to Payette's River, and proceed to Burnt and Day's River. En-

camped in company with the Americans. The trappers were in every direction in quest of beaver. The Americans will not part with one."

"Saturday 28th. Our traps gave but one otter. Before all were raised it was 10 a. m. Advanced south on the fork. The Americans informed me it was their intention to follow me to the Columbia. I informed them I could not offer them better terms than my own men had. With this they were satisfied."

"Sunday, October 6th. Reached Reed's (Boise) River. I have little hope as the American trappers are everywhere."

"Thursday, October 17th. Crossed Camasse (Kamas) plains and encamped at sunset on fork of Malade River (western Idaho). Here we found a camp of Americans, five men of the same party who had joined us on Wazer's River."

"October 24th. The Americans being in want of supplies, applied for trade. They consented to one-quarter less than Indian tariff. I obtained thirteen large beaver, nineteen small, twenty-five musquash; also received from Henry Goddin thirty-five large beaver in payment of his debt to the company. This man deserted three years ago. Since the Americans have been with us they have taken only thirteen beaver and are discouraged."

"November 2d. Stormy weather prevented starting. It is my intent to amuse the American party now with us so that McKay's men may have time to trap the beaver where the Americans purpose going. As they are not aware of this, it is so much the more in our favor."

Ogden then moved eastward up the Snake, and thence up the Portneuf.

"Friday, 30th November. This morning the Americans who have been in company with us since 18th October started for Salt Lake. The beaver we have traded from them exceed one hundred. During the time they have been with us they have trapped only twenty-six, so they lost more by meeting than we have."

"December 20th. At midday two Americans of a party of seven arrived and informed me two days since they separated from Mr. McKay and party in Day's Defile with perhaps five hundred beaver. He cannot cross the mountains owing to the snow and the weak state of his horses. These Americans traded forty-nine horses from the Nez Perces at an extravagant rate averaging \$50. They lost nineteen crossing the plains from Day's Defile. They were obliged to eat six. The Americans had ten stolen by the Snakes; one American remained with Mr. McKay. Friday, 21st. The Americans left to join the camp at Blackfoot Hill."

"December 24th. Snow again last night. At an early hour we were in motion, ascending Snake River two miles, and camped. The American party of six joined us, their leader a man named Tulloch, a decent fellow. He informed me his company would readily enter into an agreement regarding deserters. He informed me the conduct of Gardner's at our meeting four years since has not been approved. Tulloch speaks highly of the treatment he received from McKay. I should certainly be shocked if any man of principle approved of such conduct as Gardner's."¹³

"1828—January 1. The men paid me their respects and were politely received. The Americans followed the example and received the same treatment. The Americans leave for Salt Lake."

"Saturday, 5th January. One of the party who accompanied the Americans as far as the source of the Portneuf River arrived this morning and reported snow not so deep in that quarter, numerous herds of buffalo crossing and recrossing. They have hope of succeeding in reaching Salt Lake. If so, we may see them again in fifteen days. It is more than probable that one of the chief traders of the company (Smith-Jackson-Sublette) will return with them to arrange about deserters. This would be most desirable. Although our trappers have their goods on moderate terms, the price of their beaver is certainly low compared to Americans. With them, beaver large and small are averaged at \$5 each; with us, \$2 for large and \$1 for small. Here is a wide difference. All to their liberty to trade with the natives. It is optional with them to take furs to St. Louis, where they obtain \$5.50. One-third of the American trappers follow this plan. Goods are sold to them at least one hundred and fifty per cent dearer than we do, but they have the advantage of receiving them in the waters of the Snake country. An American trapper from the short distance he has to travel is not obliged to transport provisions, requires only half the number of horses, and very moderate in his advances. [Ogden's men require four horses each.] For three years prior to the last ones, General Ashley transported supplies to this country, and in that period has cleared \$80,000 and retired, selling the remainder of his goods in hand at an advance of one hundred and fifty per cent, payable in five years in beaver at \$5 per beaver, or in cash, optional with the purchasers. Three young men, Smith, Jackson and Subletz purchased them, who have in this first year made \$20,000. It is to be observed, finding themselves alone, they sold their goods one-third dearer than Ashley did, but have

13. Samuel Tullock, of the Smith-Jackson-Sublette Company, was a comrade of James Bridger's, being the one who vouched for Bridger's discovery of Great Salt Lake. Johnson Gardner, mentioned by Ogden, was instrumental in inducing about twenty-five Hudson's Bay Company trappers to desert, and dispose of their furs to General Ashley on Henry's Fork, in 1825.

held out a promise of a reduction in prices this year. What a contrast between these young men and myself. They have been only six years in the country and without a doubt in as many more will be independent men."

"Wednesday, 16th. The Americans are anxious to procure snowshoes, and I am equally so they should not, as I am of opinion they are anxious to bring over a party of trappers to this quarter. I have given orders to all not to make any for the Americans. This day they offered \$25 for one pair and \$20 for another, but failed. Five men traded leather with the Snakes. (18th) The Americans continue offers for snowshoes but without success."

"Sunday, 20th. . . . Tulloch, the American, who failed to get through the snow to Salt Lake, tried to engage an Indian to carry letters to the American depot at Salt Lake. This I cannot prevent. It is impossible for me to bribe so many Indians with my party. I have succeeded in preventing them from procuring snowshoes."

"January 22, 1828. A Snake arrived and informed the American trader one of their caches had been stolen by the Plains Indians. From the manner he describes the place, no doubt remains of its being stolen. In my mind this fellow is one of the thieves. Property in it valued at about \$600. How long will the Snakes be allowed to steal and murder I cannot say. The Americans are most willing to declare war against them, and requested if they did in the spring, 'would I assist them?' To this I replied, 'if I found myself in company with them I would not stand idle.' I am most willing to begin, but not knowing the opinion of the Company, it is a delicate point to decide. Acting for myself, I will not hesitate to say I would willingly sacrifice a year or two to exterminate the whole Snake tribe, women and children excepted. In so doing I could fully justify myself before God and man. Those who live at a distance are of a different opinion. My reply to them is: come out and suffer and judge for yourselves if forbearance has not been carried beyond bounds ordained by Scripture, and surely this is the only guide a Christian should follow. A hunter today killed twenty-two antelope by driving them in a bank of snow and knifing them, not allowing one to escape. Two hundred antelope have been killed wantonly in the last week, for not more than one-fourth of the meat has been brought to camp. No place is more suitable for a large party to winter than this."

"Wednesday, 23d. The American is now very low spirited. He cannot hire a man to go to his cache, nor snowshoes, nor does he suspect that I prevented. This day he offered eight beaver and \$50 for a pair, and a prime horse, to any one who would carry a letter to the American camp. In this also he failed. I have supplied the Americans with meat, as they cannot procure it without

snowshoes. The Americans are starving on Bear River, according to report, no buffalo in that quarter, they are reduced to eat horses and dogs. We could not learn from Indians if the American traders had come up from St. Louis."

"Friday, 25th. Snow and storms continue, a terrible winter. A man who went in quest of lost traps arrived with reports of fearful distress of the Americans. Horses dead, caches rifled. I believe this, as a trapper saw calico among the Snakes, traded from the Snakes of the Plains. The Americans are determined to proceed but find it is to no purpose, these extravagant offers. They are making snowshoes themselves, which they ought to have done two weeks ago. I cannot ascertain the motive of their journey south. I dread their returning with liquor. A small quantity would be most advantageous to them but the reverse to me. I know not their intentions, but had I the same chance they have, long since I would have had a good stock of liquor here, and every beaver in the camp would be mine. If they succeed in reaching their camp, they may bring twenty or thirty trappers here, which would be most injurious to my spring hunt. As the party have now only ten traps, no good can result to us if they succeed in reaching their depot and returning here. We have this in our favor: they have a mountain to cross, and before the snow melts can convey but little property from the depot, as with horses they cannot reach here before April."

"Sunday, 27th. The Americans expect to start tomorrow. Their snowshoes are poor makeshifts and will give them trouble. It will be a month before they can return. Meanwhile there will be no beaver skins left among the Snakes."

"Monday, 28th. . . . Two Americans this day started for Salt Lake. They are not sanguine, as the man I sent out (Portneuf to succor McKay) has failed. They have an arduous task, wretched snowshoes, and this is the first time they ever used them. I sent men with them as far as the Indian village, as they intend sleeping there tonight (in case of stray beaver skin). The ice is very weak. One of the Americans had a narrow escape, a minute more and he would have gone. He made a noble struggle for his life."

"Wednesday, 30th. I fear the man I sent with the Americans has gone off with them. I sent a messenger to the Indian village after him. (31st) The absent man arrived."

"February 4, 1828. The two Americans who left on the 28th unexpectedly made their appearance. Most agreeable to me but a cruel disappointment to them. They could only reach the sources of Portneuf River, when they returned. (6th.) The Americans again making preparations to start for their depot. From precautions taken they may succeed and reach Salt Lake. This will be

their third attempt, and they will have no time to lose if they are to return for the spring hunt. (10th.) . . . The two Americans again set out for their cache. It is laughable, so many attempts on both sides and no success. (Ogden's messengers to McKay had failed again.) Was it not I feared a strong American party here I should undertake the journey myself and would succeed."

"Tuesday, February 12, 1828. At dawn of day Payette and two men set out in quest of McKay. A war party of Blackfeet has taken the direction of Salt Lake. The Americans left here are alarmed at the news, not only on account of the two men, but for their camp in that quarter. The Americans have only twenty-four horses left, the rest dead from cold, and of the fifty they brought I have no hope one horse can escape, though covered with robes each night."

"Saturday, 16th. The two Americans arrived this afternoon accompanied by one of their traders¹⁴ and two men they met on Portneuf River near the source. They report a fight with the Blackfeet, and old Pierre, the Iroquois,¹⁵ who deserted from me four years ago, was killed and cut to pieces. Pierre owes a debt to the Company, but as we have a mortgage on his property in Canada, we shall recover. Their traders from St. Louis did not arrive last fall owing to the severe weather in Salt Lake region. All except the freemen of the Flat Heads reached the depot safely. The loss in horses by Blackfeet has been sixty. It was a novel sight in this part of the world to see a party arrive with dogs and sleds, for seldom are two inches of snow to be found here. They informed me his Royal Highness, the Duke of York, was dead, and, of course, the old story that we shall soon be obliged to leave the Columbia. At all events though, they have later news than I have; the treaty does not expire before November. Then we shall know what to expect."

"Monday, February 18, 1828. By the arrival of the Americans we have a new stock of cards in camp, 8 packs. Some of the American trappers have already lost upwards of \$400, equal to two hundred beavers, or to the Americans, eighty beavers. Old Goddin, who left me in the fall, is in a fair way of going to St. Louis, having sold his eight horses and ten traps for \$1500. He has his fall and spring hunt, equal to \$600 more, which makes him an independent man. In the Hudson's Bay service, with the strictest economy, barring accidents, in the course of ten years he might collect that sum. Is it surprising men give preference to the American service, and pay extravagant prices for beavers?"

14. Robert Campbell, the captain of the party in which Bridger served for some time; Bridger may or may not have been one of the men accompanying Campbell at this time.

15. Of whom Beckwourth spoke occasionally when with Bridger.

"Tuesday, 19th. More rain. The Americans are making preparations to go to the Flat Heads. Their trader, Mr. Campbell, informed me, two of their trappers, Goodrich and Johnson, who joined my camp last fall, are heavily indebted to his concern. I replied I had no knowledge of the same, and that it was his duty to secure his men and debts also. I said my conduct to them was far different from theirs to me four years since. He said it was regretted; that there was no regular company, otherwise I should have received compensation. It may be so. At all events, dependent on me, they cannot acknowledge less. I have acted honorable and shall continue so."

"Wednesday, 20th. The two trappers are to return to the Americans. Thirty tents of Snakes are starving near us. Stormy weather prevents the Americans attempting to cross the barren Plains. 23rd. American party left for the Flat Heads and perhaps the Kootenays. They have a long journey, but are well provided, though very silent regarding the object of their journey. I believe they intend trapping the forks of the Missouri, for which they are strong enough in numbers. Two of our horses dying a day from cold."

"March 3, 1828. Two Americans off for Salt Lake. They do not intend to return. (17th.) The Americans, now five in number, more or less starving, do not attempt to take beaver, but gamble from morning to night. May they continue. My trappers are not idle. One canoe is finished; preparations for two more. Will take beaver with our canoes." [Down the Snake since so many horses have died.]

"March 26th. Americans with us since December departed for Salt Lake. We separated on good terms. (27th.) Two Americans arrived from Salt Lake, surprised not to find their party here, whom they came to assist across the mountains. They intend going to the Utahs and started for Portneuf River. (30th.) Moved to Portneuf River, opposite the American camp."

"April 24th, 1828. Have completed our second thousand of beaver independent of McKay's success. If no accident happens Sylville's part, I might reach Vancouver with four thousand. I have only sixteen men and dare not go to the source of these streams. (25th.) Fine weather at last, two of the trappers arrived, having narrowly escaped the Blackfeet. I wish to God McKay's party would make their appearance and relieve my anxiety. Should an accident happen to us all is lost."

"May 6th, 1828. Began retracing steps for Fort Vancouver from entrance of Blackfoot River. (8th.) McKay and party arrived with four hundred and forty beaver. This strengthens us against the Blackfeet."

"May 10th. Fine weather; saw the track of a large band of horses and suspect the Blackfeet have stolen them from the Americans. The day guard called to arms and at a distance we saw an armed party on horseback making for our camp. In a second we were in readiness, and, having secured horses, advanced to meet them, but in lieu of Blackfeet they proved to be Plains Snakes returned from Henry Forks."

"They report two days since raiding the Blackfeet. In the loot were clothes, hunter's hats, shoes, etc., horses belonging to the Americans who wintered with us. The furs were left on the plains. A convincing proof the Americans have been murdered and pillaged, knowing how bloodthirsty the Blackfeet are, and how careless the Americans. The sight of this caused gloom in camp. We may be doomed to the same fate. God preserve us. The Snakes are on the way to Salt Lake to find Americans there and obtain reward for restoration of property."

"Saturday, May 24, 1828. Again a stormy night of rain. Trappers started at an early hour, and soon two arrived with the alarm, Blackfeet! Louis LaValle was killed within half mile of camp. I gave orders to secure the horses and sent McKay with twelve men to rescue four trappers in the same direction, fearing they were also killed. At midday he returned with the body of the deceased, which he found naked on the plains, but not scalped. The absent trappers also came in with him. After the Blackfeet had killed LaValle, they were discovered by the trappers, who hid. The war party of sixty in number have come from Salt Lake. They had a bale wrapper with the American company's name on it. I had the body interred, valuable smart loss. He leaves a wife and three children destitute." [Ogden then crosses the country to Fort Vancouver.]

Concerning the casualties suspected by Ogden in his entry of May 10th, 1828, General Ashley writes to an unknown correspondent (4) as follows: "Mr. Tullock further states that some time after separating from Mr. Ogden and party, but while within about fifteen miles of his encampment, he, Mr. Tullock, and party, were attacked by a large party of Blackfeet Indians; the result was the loss of three of his party killed, about \$4,000 worth of beaver fur, forty horses, and a considerable amount of merchandise. Notwithstanding, I do not believe from the idea I have of the character of Mr. Ogden, that he could dictate such conduct to the Indians."

CHAPTER XVII

FANCIFUL STORY OF BRIDGER'S MARRIAGE

ISSUING from the trappers' troubles with the Blackfoot Indians is a fanciful story of James Bridger's marriage to a Blackfoot maiden. The tale appeared some years after the Salt Lake rendezvous was abandoned, and has most of the earmarks of an ingenious fabrication; but since it has had a certain vogue (3) it is herewith reproduced for what it may be worth in the way of entertainment. Many if not most of the trappers, at one time or another, had Indian "housekeepers"; and a few trappers followed the Indian custom of taking a plurality of wives; but there is no reason to doubt the more authentic assertions that Bridger was married but three times, first to a Flathead, second to a Ute, and third to a Snake, each of the wives being taken successively, after the death of the previous one, and not in polygamy.

"During a truce with the Blackfeet, who were camped within a few miles of the blockhouse which the trappers had constructed, Bridger found it necessary to chastise the insolence of two of the savages, who finding him alone in their village, proceeded to abuse him roundly. For a few minutes Bridger bore with them, but at last becoming infuriated at their unbearable insults, he pitched into the two in a regular rough-and-tumble style, and battered them up terribly. Selecting a number of their friends they surrounded the trapper unawares and made him a prisoner.

"He was now bound, and conveyed to a lodge on the outskirts of the village and left there while a consultation was being held to decide his fate. Night came and still the discussion went on. Some argued that Bridger's offense deserved death, and that he should be carried to the mountains and tortured, while others were for more pacific measures, and showed what advantages would accrue to them from a continuation of their friendly relations with the trappers.

"At last the faction for revenge triumphed and a guard was sent to the lodge to bring the captive to the council that he might hear his fate. Arriving at the impromptu prison, the guards stalked in but were surprised to find that it was deserted. The bird had flown. A hurried alarm was given, but Bridger reached his camp in safety, and the Blackfeet fearing the vengeance of the trappers

for their breach of faith, made their travaux, packed up their goods and fled.

"It was afterward told, that Bridger's visit to the village had been made for the sake of a bright-eyed and handsome young squaw, who had returned with interest the sudden affection of the young white trapper. When he was taken a captive to the lodge, she at first determined to hasten to the blockhouse and notify his comrades so that they might demand his release, but fearing an attack, in which some of her relatives would be killed, and during which her lover would certainly be assassinated, she chose the wiser course of endeavoring to effect his release herself.

"This she felt would be an easy matter when she found that owing to a division of counsels the discussion would be prolonged until late in the night. Making her way as noiselessly as possible toward the lodge, she discovered a sentinel posted before its door. Crouching almost to the earth she crept away and from another quarter crawled to the back of the tent, where, after satisfying herself that she had not been seen or heard by the warrior on guard, she cut a long slit in the buffalo-skin curtain and entered the lodge. Here she found Bridger tugging away at his bonds, and placing her hand over his mouth to prevent an exclamation, she cut the rawhide thongs and motioned him to follow her.

"Slowly and silently they emerged from the tent and stole away from the village, and here, after some counsel as to which was the best way to avoid the sentinels and the pursuit that would soon be made, she left him. Before parting, however, she agreed that whether there was peace or war between her people and his, she would meet him in a certain grove of pinions at the base of a distant peak which he pointed out.

"After one hundred moons I will meet you there,' she said, and holding her to his breast for a moment the trapper tore himself away and vanished down the steep cliffs. When out of sight the Blackfoot maiden strolled leisurely back into the village and was soon slumbering in her parental lodge. The sequel to this little romance was Bridger's marriage, after the Indian fashion, with the young squaw, who was afterwards able to render many favors and benefits to the white men.

"As the fall drew on, his brother trappers noticed that Bridger was looking ahead to some important event, and keeping a notch-stick with unusual assiduity, and at last, when this was pretty nearly filled with the triangular marks, Bridger saddled up his horse, and leading another, set out toward the mountains, bearing for a certain towering peak that loomed up above its fellows like Saul amongst his brother Israelites. On the fifth day after starting out Bridger came into camp followed by his Blackfoot bride, his horses evidently having seen quite a hard time, but the young couple looked radiant and happy."

During the Smith-Jackson-Sublette regime in the mountains, Bridger's loyal support of his employers (who according to a number of writers were actually his fellow partners in a way), carried him out through the danger zone in the mountains with the fur laden caravans on one or two occasions at least. Not only were they liable to be waylaid by bands of marauders in the mountains, but the plains tribes were troublesome. The incident here given is related by Triplett (3).

"At one time, entrenched on an open plain on the Platte River, he (Bridger) and five comrades fought off a large war party of the Sioux, every one of the trappers being wounded, but none killed. Of the savages twenty-five were killed and a large number wounded. Toward the close of this fight, which lasted for two days and nights, it became necessary for someone to endeavor to get through the surrounding lines and bring up aid, and as it was a duty requiring not only daring, but coolness and judgment, Bridger was selected. Starting out about twelve o'clock at night, he crawled along for over two hundred yards before encountering any difficulty, but here he came upon a warrior who had been lying down beside his horse.

"Bridger's course had been perfectly noiseless, but the horse, which had been feeding in a deep ravine, scented his approach and gave a snort that aroused his master. Seeing that he was discovered, Bridger now arose and rushed on the Indian, intending to strangle him so as to prevent an alarm, but before he could reach the brave his shrill whoop had been given. Now that nothing was to be gained by further silence on his part, and hearing the rush of the Indian horses, Bridger drew his pistol, and with its muzzle almost against his enemy fired.

"The Sioux fell dead, and Bridger mounting in haste, dashed off toward a camp of his comrades lower down the river. It was a close chase, the savages pouring along in his rear, but Bridger's chance choice of a steed proved a good one, and by two o'clock he had reached his destination. The trappers were aroused and in a few minutes were in the saddle. Making a detour to gain the sand hills in the rear of the besiegers, they waited until morning, and as the attack on the little fortification began, they poured a deadly volley into the thickly clustering savages. This was enough to dispirit the Sioux, who, gathering up their dead and wounded, made all haste to get out of range. So frightened were they that they did not even take time to drive off the Flathead horses of the trappers."

An interesting sight and near-adventure which it is said came to Bridger, in company with James

Beckwourth, has often been told by Beckwourth, but not in his dictated autobiography. Triplett tries to tell it in Beckwourth's own language. These trapper-scouts were piloting a fur train through the territory of hostile Indians.

They had one day reached the ground over which both the Sioux and Pawnees roamed and hunted, and in the morning he and Bridger had beat off a force of some fifty Pawnees, and afterward continued their journey along the Republican River for some hours without molestation. Late in the afternoon, however, they had run into a band of about fifty Sioux. Although they succeeded in defeating this band also, yet he now saw that they were in for trouble. "I seen," said he, "that the Pawnees would get together a big lot of their warriors and follow after us, and the danged Sioux, I knowed, would do the same thing, so I soon saw that we'd have about a thousand Injuns after us, and we wouldn't be a taste for 'em. I seen this wouldn't do, so I says to Jim Bridger, says I, 'Jim, what we goin' ter do?' 'Damfino,' says Jim, says he, 'fight till the reds down us, I reckon, and then go under like men.' All this time, bless your soul, them pilgrims we was guidin', they was in the wagons cryin, dang me if they wasn't!

"Well, sir, I jest made up my mind that I didn't intend to give my har to no danged Injun just then, so I calculates about whar the two parties of red devils would meet, and when we got thar we drove over a raise in the plain, and jest waited. It wasn't more'n two hours till I seen the dust raisin' to the east. Them's Pawnees, by Gum, says I; and then I looked to the west, and thar the dust was a raisin', too. Them's Sioux, says I, and be danged to 'em! Well, after waitin' some time, the Injuns they seen each other, and of all the danged yelling you ever heard, it was thar. I jest layed back and laughed, and Bridger, he done some tall chucklin', too, when them two bands come together. It was lively times, you bet.

"The Injuns didn't have many guns them days, but you can jest rest sure they used their arrows for what was out. Thar they went circlin' around each other, bendin' under their horses' necks and lettin' the arrows fly. At one time the air was filled so full of arrows that they shut out the sunlight and made a cloud. Their dogs was full of 'em, their ponies was full of 'em, and every Injun in the gang had a lot of 'em stickin' inter him. I seen one of 'em, a big, fat feller, a ridin' off on his stomach with two long arrows stickin' inter the seat of his buckskins, and it put me so much in mind of a big Dutch pin-cushion that I like ter die a laughin'." In describing this unique combat the old liar waxed lurid in his profanity, and wound up with the information that he believed "them Injuns was a runnin' from each other yit."

CHAPTER XVIII

BRIDGER SHARES PROPRIETORSHIP

THE record is silent as to the specific doings of James Bridger in 1828, though it is known that he assisted David E. Jackson and William L. Sublette in the mountains, trapping, gathering and assembling furs, and sharing the trapper's troubles with the Indians. That spring it seems that Captain Sublette came out from St. Louis and aided his snowbound caravan to reach the rendezvous, which was probably centered around the Salt Lake fort, with smaller trading centers made temporarily in other places for convenience.

The season's fur collected, Sublette set out again for St. Louis with the fur train, and may have been accompanied by Bridger, for Bridger is understood to have revisited home about this time, though for only a very brief stay. The fur train reached St. Louis shortly before Christmas, 1828; but Sublette had another train ready for the mountains in a few months, with Bridger among its men, if he actually journeyed to St. Louis with Sublette on this occasion.

The company, numbering about sixty men, left St. Louis March 17, 1829, according to Joseph L. Meek (19), who was among them on his first trip to the mountains. Journeying up the Platte and the Sweetwater, Sublette halted on the Popo Agie on July 1, 1829, where he had decided to conduct the principal summer trading rendezvous. Large numbers of trappers, associated and independent, together with Indians assembled to transact the commerce of the mountains, the occasion lasting some weeks.

Neither Jedediah S. Smith nor David E. Jackson appeared at the rendezvous, partly because of their inability to reach that location, but most probably because of a misunderstanding as to where the rendezvous would be held. Both Smith and Jackson thought the trading center

was to be held somewhere on the Snake River. But with the exchanges largely completed on the Popo Agie, Milton Sublette, brother to William L., together with Henry Fraeb and Baptiste Gervais, were sent with a large party to look over the Big Horn country for furs and prospects, since the district had been abandoned by these interests for some time.

Captain William L. Sublette himself headed another party, among whom were Meek, Bridger, and others, which passed over the mountains at the head of Wind River, and thence into the beautiful valley of the Snake just below the Yellowstone Park. Here David E. Jackson and party were found, this circumstance giving birth to the name Jackson Hole and Jackson Lake, sentineled by the lofty Teton Mountains on the west.

But Smith's whereabouts were not known, and parties were sent out to find him. Joseph L. Meek was with the little band that found their way into Pierre's Hole, now the Teton basin, on the opposite side of the Teton mountains from Jackson Hole, in what is now Idaho. Here they found Smith, and hither the Sublette and Jackson contingents journeyed, this being the first meeting of the partners in many months.

Sublette and Jackson, remembering their rather tart relations with Peter Skene Ogden, and being aware of the wealth of furs on the Snake and its tributaries which Ogden admitted were the best fur streams in the West, had come with serious intentions of trapping the autumn season in this section. But Smith had been very well treated by the Hudson's Bay Company on his latest journey, which carried him into the far Northwest, and had agreed with Dr. John McLoughlin that he would surrender the Snake River country in the interests of amity. Thus Smith prevailed upon his partners to depart, and they passed northward to the headwaters of the Madison River in Montana northwest of Yellowstone Park, after deciding among themselves to winter in the Wind River valley.

Jedediah S. Smith, by this time a well seasoned traveler and guide, assumed the leadership of the party. While yet within the Snake valley a band of Blackfoot thieves

swooped onto the encampment one morning endeavoring to stampede the trappers' mounts, but in this they failed. Thomas Fitzpatrick surrounded the few animals that got away, and while two horses were shot under him, he succeeded in retrieving the stock. A six-hour fight ensued, in which several of the trappers were wounded. The Indians continued to harass the trappers on the way over the divide, and there was much fear that on reaching the stronghold of the Blackfoot nation there would be further trouble.

The country traversed by this company, according to Meek, was practically unknown even to the trappers at that time. Few white men had been in the district since the days of Lewis and Clark. The party stopped a while at Missouri Lake, but in November passed northeasterly onto the Gallatin River on a very rough divide. The snow became deep, and the country untracked, hence there was not only suffering for want of food, and horses lost in the snow, but the men many times were bewildered.

On one occasion Meek ascended a high peak, from which he quite erroneously declared he could see the Yellowstone, the Missouri, and the Snake river. Later Smith sent another scout, Moses (Black) Harris, to a high peak to reconnoitre, who returned without adding to their store of geographical knowledge. Pressed to tell what he saw, Harris declared he "saw the city of St. Louis and one fellow taking a drink!" They finally came out onto the plains of the Big Horn at Stinking, or Shoshone River. They pushed on down stream to the Big Horn, where they found Milton Sublette and his forty trappers encamped.

After resting a few days, the combined parties cached their furs and moved southward up the Big Horn, over the divide and into the Wind River valley again, reaching the designated winter quarters about Christmas, 1829. Captain Sublette started at once for St. Louis, accompanied by Moses (Black) Harris, the two men having a train of pack-dogs, which Harris and others had learned to utilize from the Hudson's Bay Company men on Snake River.

Game was so scarce in the Wind River valley, because

of the hard winter, that Smith and Jackson cached their additional furs and moved over into the Powder River valley to the east, starting on January 1, 1830. The animals were subsisted on the bark of the cottonwood, the collecting of the wood giving employment to the many men, upon their arrival on Powder River where the cottonwood abounded. From January 15 to April 1, 1830, the trappers lay peacefully in winter quarters.

David E. Jackson, accompanied by about one-half of the men, returned westward to the Snake River, evidently in spite of the arrangement Smith had made with the Hudson's Bay men. Jedediah S. Smith, accompanied by Joseph L. Meek, and with James Bridger as pilot, took the rest of the trappers over onto Tongue River for a brief stop, proceeding thence to the Big Horn across the mountains. Game and beaver were plentiful, though it required but a short time to catch all the beaver and frighten the game from any given locality, hence they moved on.

Smith designed to enter the richly furred realm of the Blackfoot tribe, well known to Bridger from his first and second year's experiences in the mountains. But in crossing Bovey's Fork, swollen with melting snows, thirty horses and three hundred beaver traps were carried away in the torrent. But Smith kept on, passing through Pryor's Gap to Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone, and thence to Rosebud River, finally reaching the main Yellowstone River where it makes a great bend to the east, enclosing a large plain covered with grass, and having extensive cottonwood bottoms, which subsequently became a favorite wintering ground for trappers generally.

We learn from Joseph Meek on this occasion that the inordinate inquisitiveness of the Yellowstone bears, when led by the scent of food, is not confined to the half-domestic bears that grace the park today. Meek had acquired some delicious buffalo cow fat, which lay beside the bed one night, being a standing invitation for the bear to call as soon as he got the wind of the savory fat. The bear, going off a short way to eat the morsel, one of the men raised his head to satisfy his own curiosity.

"Down went our heads under the blankets," says Meek, "and I kept mine covered pretty snug, while the beast took another walk over the bed, but finally went off again to a little distance. Michael then wanted to shoot; but I said, 'No, no; hold on, or the brute will kill us sure.' When the bear heard our voices, back he ran again, and jumped on the bed as before. I'd have been happy to have felt myself sinking ten feet under ground, while that bear promenaded over and around us! However, he couldn't quite make out our style, and finally took fright and ran off down the mountain. Wanting to be revenged for his impudence, I went after him, and seeing a good chance, shot him dead. Then I took my turn at running over him a while!"

The Yellowstone River barred Smith's way with high water, and he found bull boats necessary to effect a crossing. Meek says, incidentally, that both Indians and trappers, when accompanied by their families, will spread their lodges on the ground and deposit all their belongings thereon. A rope was then run through the peg holes around the edge, the skin being drawn up like a pouch. The heavier camp goods were then stowed in the whole, forming a ball, but balanced so that the open end would ride upward.

A rope being tied to this pouch, it was launched on the water, the children of the camp perched on top, and the women swimming after and clinging to it, while a man holding to the rope swam ahead, holding onto the tail or mane of his horse. In this way, though dancing like a light canoe on the waves, the lodge and its freight were piloted across.

Once across, Smith was in the heart of the Blackfoot country, but since it had never been trapped, he kept going, crossing the Musselshell and thence reaching the Judith basin. Beaver were abundant, but trapping proved impracticable because of a large Blackfoot village near by. Their war on the trappers was ceaseless, Meek tells us. Their thefts of traps and horses occurred frequently, and Smith found himself involved in incessant warfare, without hope of victory or gain. Thus the party gave up the

quest for beaver and returned the way they went, up the Big Horn to Wind River, where the December caches had been established.

While these furs were being disinterred and pressed out in readiness for transporting across the plains, Samuel Tullock, with a party, was dispatched for the fur cache on the Big Horn near the Stinking River. Meek and a trapper named Ponto accompanied Tullock, the two doing the excavating for the furs. While digging the bank caved in, killing Ponto and injuring Meek slightly, the former being "rolled in a blanket and pitched into the river" and the latter loaded on with the furs and carried back to the Wind River rendezvous site.

Captain William L. Sublette, bringing fourteen wagons loaded with merchandise, arrived at the rendezvous on July 16, 1830.* Meek says a thousand dollars a day was not too much for some of the reckless trappers to spend on their squaws, for horses, alcohol, and other supposed requirements.

But Smith, Jackson, and Sublette had drunk of success in the fur business to satiety, almost; and another set of mountaineers, who had been actually at the head of the heavy end of the work for some time, were imbibing freely of the riches in the fur trade. Thus on August 4, 1830,

*Jedediah S. Smith, David E. Jackson, and W. L. Sublette addressed a letter dated October 29, 1830, at St. Louis, Mo., to the Hon. John H. Eaton, Secretary of War, as follows:

Sir: The business commenced by General Ashley some years ago, of taking furs from the United States territory beyond the Rocky Mountains, has since been continued by Jedediah S. Smith, David E. Jackson, and William L. Sublette, under the firm of Smith, Jackson, and Sublette. They commenced business in 1826 and have since then continued it; and have made observations and gained information which they think it important to communicate to the government.

The number of men they have employed has usually been from eighty to one hundred and eighty; and with these divided into parties, they have traversed every part of the country west of the Rocky Mountains from the Peninsula of California to the mouth of the Columbia River. Pack horses, or rather mules, were at first used; but in the beginning of the present year it was determined to try wagons; and in the month of April last, on the 10th day of the month, a caravan of ten wagons, drawn by five mules each, and two dearborns, drawn by one mule each, set out from St. Louis.

We have eighty-one men in company, all mounted on mules; and these were exclusive of a party left in the mountains. Our route from St. Louis was nearly due west to the western limits of the State; and thence along the Santa Fe Trail about forty miles; from which the course was some degrees north of west, across the waters of the Kansas, and up the great Platte River to the Rocky Mountains, and to the head of Wind River where it issues from the mountains.

This took us until the 16th of July, and was as far as we wished the wagons to go, as the furs to be brought in were to be collected at this place, which is, or was this year, the great rendezvous of the persons engaged in that business. Here the wagons could easily have crossed the Rocky Mountains, it being what is called the *Southern Pass*, had it been desirable for them to do so, which it was not for the reason stated.

For our support, at leaving the Missouri settlements, until we should get into the buffalo country, we drove twelve head of cattle beside a milk cow. Eight of these only

Thomas Fitzpatrick, James Bridger, Milton Sublette, Henry Fraeb and Baptiste Gervais signed the papers which made them owners of the company, which from that time forward was known as the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

Wending their toilsome way out of the mountains, Smith was attracted into the Santa Fé merchandise trade and was killed by Indians a year or two later; and Jackson dropped entirely out of the fur trade as had Major Henry; while Wm. L. Sublette, emulating General Ashley, continued to handle the supply trains for the new fur company for some years.

being required for use before we got to the buffaloes, the others went on to the head of Wind River. We began to fall in with the buffaloes on the Platte about three hundred and fifty miles from the white settlements; and from that time lived on buffaloes, the quantity being infinitely beyond what we needed.

On the 4th of August, the wagons being in the meantime loaded with the furs which had been previously taken, we set out on the return to St. Louis. All the high points of the mountains then in view were white with snow; but the passes and valleys, and all the level country, were green with grass. Our route back was over the same ground nearly, as in going out, and we arrived at St. Louis on the 10th of October, bringing back the ten wagons, the dearborns being left behind; four of the oxen and the milk cow were also brought back to the settlements in Missouri, as we did not need them for provision.

Our men were all healthy during the whole time: we suffered nothing by the Indians, and had no accidents but the death of one man being buried under a bank of earth that fell in upon him and another being crippled at the same time. Of the mules, we lost but one by fatigue, and two horses stolen by the Kansas Indians; the grass being, along the whole route going and coming, sufficient for the support of the horses and mules.

The usual weight in the wagons was about one thousand eight hundred pounds. The usual progress of the wagons was from fifteen to twenty miles per day. The country being almost all open, level, and prairie, the chief obstructions were ravines and creeks, the banks of which required cutting down, and for this purpose a few pioneers were generally kept ahead of the caravan. This is the first time that wagons ever went to the Rocky Mountains; and the ease and safety with which it was done proved the facility of communicating overland with the Pacific Ocean; the route from the *Southern Pass*, where the wagons stopped, to the Great Falls of the Columbia, being easier and better than on this side of the mountains, with grass enough for horses and mules, but a scarcity of game for the support of men.

CHAPTER XIX

COMPETITION BECOMES KEENER

THE new company, formed on August 4, 1830, plunged at once into untried fields, and spread its men over a much wider range than had ever before been possible. Henry Fraeb (Frapp or Frack) and Baptiste Gervais selected a small number of trappers and dropped southward into the middle Rocky Mountains, finding splendid fields in what is now Colorado, where they remained over the ensuing winter.

Thomas Fitzpatrick, James Bridger, and Milton G. Sublette conducted an unusually large party, numbering about two hundred men, all splendidly equipped, into the exceedingly dangerous but tempting territory of the Blackfoot tribes in middle and western Montana. From the Wind River this party passed to the Yellowstone, thence to Smith's River, and to the Great Falls of the Missouri, whence Major Henry had been ousted in 1822.

Bridger well remembered this episode; but like Henry, could not forget the wealth of the furs thereabouts, and that no trapping had been allowed by the Blackfoot tribes.

"These savages are the most dangerous banditti of the mountains, and the inveterate foe of the trapper," says Washington Irving in his *Adventures of Captain Bonneville*. "They are Ishmaelites of the first order, always with weapon in hand ready for action. The young braves of the tribe, who are destitute of property, go to war for booty; to gain horses and acquire the means of setting up a lodge, supporting a family, and entitling themselves to a seat in the public councils.

"The veteran warriors fight merely for the love of the thing, and the consequence which success gives them among their people. They are capital horsemen, and are generally well mounted on short, stout horses, similar to the prairie ponies to be met with in St. Louis. When on a war party, however, they go on foot, to enable them to skulk through the country with greater secrecy; to keep in thickets and ravines, and use more adroit subterfuges and stratagems. Their mode of warfare is entirely by ambush, surprise and sudden assaults in the night time. If they succeed in

causing a panic, they dash forward with headlong fury; if the enemy is on the alert and shows no signs of fear, they become wary and deliberate in their movements.

"Some of them are armed in the primitive style, with bows and arrows; the greater part have American fuseses, made after the fashion of those of the Hudson's Bay Company. These they procure at the trading post of the American Fur Company, on Maria's River, where they traffic their peltries for arms, ammunition, clothing and trinkets. They are extremely fond of spiritous liquors and tobacco, for which nuisances they are ready to exchange, not merely their guns and horses, but even their wives and daughters. As they are a treacherous race, and have cherished a lurking hostility to the whites ever since one of their tribe was killed by Mr. Lewis, the associate of General Clark, in his exploring expedition across the Rocky Mountains, the American Fur Company is obliged constantly to keep at their post a garrison of sixty or seventy men.

"This hostile band keeps about the headwaters of the Missouri, and numbers about nine hundred fighting men. Once in the course of two or three years they abandon their usual abodes and make a visit to the Arapahoes of the Arkansas. Their route lies either through the Crow country and the Black Hills, or through the lands of the Nez Perces, Flatheads, Bannacks and Shoshonies. As they enjoy their favorite state of hostility with all these tribes, their expeditions are prone to be conducted in the most lawless and predatory style; nor do they hesitate to extend their maraudings to any party of white men they meet with, following their trail, hovering about their camps, waylaying and dogging the caravans of the free traders, and murdering the solitary trapper. The consequences are frequent and desperate fights between them and the mountaineers, in the wild defiles and fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains."

James Bridger was unlucky enough to become exposed to the Blackfoot scalpers at one time on this journey, and the shots from the Indians reached flesh in Bridger's horse several times. This caused the animal to rear and pitch; and by reason of the violent movements, Bridger dropped his gun, and the Indians snatched it up. Thereupon there was nothing to do but run, which Bridger accordingly did with all the speed his mount could muster.

Meek says that soon afterward, as was customary, Bridger, as captain of the company, was making the rounds of the camp examining the guns of the trappers and camp keepers. Bridger found the weapon of one

Maloney in a very dirty condition. "What would you do," asked Bridger, "with a gun like that if the Indians were to charge on the camp?" "Be gorra, I would throw it to thim and run, the way you did," answered the Irishman. Meek says it was some time before Bridger again examined Maloney's gun.

Leaving the Great Falls of the Missouri, Fitzpatrick turned southward to the Three Forks section, having succeeded in keeping the Blackfoot warriors at bay by reason of his formidable force of men. However, there were occasional Blackfoot sorties, and the lone trappers were always in great danger, the result being four trappers killed on the way. The traps yielded plentifully, though, and the party passed over the divide west of the present Yellowstone Park rather well satisfied with their catch.

Skirting the foot of the Gallatin Range, in the northwest corner of Yellowstone Park, Bridger is generally believed to have, on this occasion, trapped the branches of the Gallatin and Madison rivers within the present park area, and to have come upon the geyser formations, and visited Norris, Lower and Upper Geyser basins before hurrying out and onward again with his rapidly moving party. Bridger was very fond of the unusual in Rocky Mountain scenery, having visited and revisited many places for no other purpose than to enjoy and to study. Thus he could hardly be expected to leave such an interesting place before it became quite necessary, nor to remain long away from it, subsequently.

Being relieved of the restraint imposed by Jedediah S. Smith, the party trapped the Snake River and its tributaries, passing thence to the Bear River, and finally arrived at the Salt Lake rendezvous of previous years, only to find it occupied by Peter Skene Ogden and a body of trappers.

"And now commenced that irritating and reprehensible style of rivalry with which the different companies were accustomed to annoy one another," Meek told Mrs. Victor, his biographer. "Accompanying Mr. Ogden's trading party were a party of Rockway Indians, who were from the north, and who were employed by the Hudson's Bay Company, as the Iroquois and Crows were, to trap

for them. Fitzpatrick and associates camped in the neighborhood of Ogden's company and immediately set about endeavoring to purchase from the Rockways and others the furs collected for Mr. Ogden.

"Not succeeding by fair means, if the means to such an end could be called fair, they opened a keg of whiskey, which, when the Indians had got a taste, soon drew them away from the Hudson's Bay trader, the regulations of whose company forbade the selling or giving of liquors to the Indians. Under its influence the furs were disposed of to the Rocky Mountain Company, who in this manner obtained nearly the whole product of their year's hunt. This course of conduct was naturally exceedingly disagreeable to Mr. Ogden, as well as unprofitable also, and a feeling of hostility grew up and increased between the two camps.

"While matters were in this position, a stampede occurred one day among the horses in Ogden's camp, and two or three of the animals ran away and ran into the camp of the rival company. Among them was the horse of Mr. Ogden's Indian wife, which had escaped, with her babe hanging to the saddle.

"Not many minutes elapsed before the mother, following her child and horse, entered the camp, passing right through it and catching the now halting steed by the bridle. At the same moment she espied one of her company's pack horses, loaded with beaver, which had also run into the enemy's camp. The men had already begun to exult over the circumstance, considering this chance load of beaver as theirs by the laws of war. But not so the Indian woman. Mounting her own horse, she fearlessly seized the pack horse by the halter and led it out of camp with its costly burden.

"At this undaunted action some of the baser sort of men cried out, 'shoot her, shoot her,' but a majority interfered with opposing cries of 'let her go; let her alone; she's a brave woman; I glory in her pluck;' and other like admiring expressions. While the clamor continued the wife of Ogden had galloped away with her baby and her pack horse."

Fitzpatrick's position in this place was so untenable, however, that he withdrew shortly, leaving Ogden to repose as peacefully as he might in the fortified sanctuary which Fitzpatrick had assisted in building, though bemoaning the loss of a wealth of furs which the Rocky Mountain Fur Company had tricked him out of. Wending their way eastward up the Bear River, across the Green River basin and through the South Pass, the Fitzpatrick party completed a circuit of nearly twelve hundred miles upon settling again in the Powder River rendezvous for the winter (1830-1831).

The winter passed pleasantly, the trappers waxing fat on idleness and good fare. An express was dispatched to St. Louis during the winter, Joseph L. Meek and a companion starting with the messages; but Indians slew the companion, and Meek encountered an express party for other interests to whom he entrusted his errand, so that he could return to Powder River.

Early in March, 1831, Fitzpatrick, Bridger and Sublette assembled their two hundred trappers and accouterments and set forth again for the irresistible Blackfoot country, attended by a horde of free trappers and a few Indians and halfbreeds. Unluckily, on the third day, in the evening, the trappers' band of horses, grazing on a bottomland, was espied by some young Crow warriors, into whose vicinity the trappers had set themselves down unawares. Three hundred horses thus vanished in a cloud of dust raised by the Indians.

This predicament was a poser: the trappers had but a handful of animals remaining, and the free trappers had none to spare, not even to be risked on an errand of pursuit; moreover, it was extremely doubtful that replacements could be effected, since the trappers were bound for enemy country. James Bridger then called for volunteers, and about a hundred men dashed forth with him on foot after the thieves, trusting their perseverance, patience and superior wits to carry them through to success.

For two or three days and nights in succession the trappers pushed forward on the trail of the Crows, finally coming upon the culprits in the dusk. Shielded by some timber, and the width of a small stream, and under the cover of darkness, the trappers reconnoitered the situation minutely before deciding on a plan of action, for much was at stake. There were sixty fine young Indian braves about the camp fires, exulting over their great success, within the protection of a small corral or fort where the horses were being held for greater safety.

Bridger stationed his men within firing range of the unsuspecting Crows, while Antoine Godin and Robert Newell stealthily advanced, under the very poles forming



JOSEPH L. MEEK (by Joseph Buchtel). Trapper and Indian fighting companion of James Bridger. (19)

the enclosure. Getting their bearings quickly they opened the fence and stampeded the stock outward, having mounted two of the horses for better maneuvering. As a counter irritant Bridger and his comrades opened fire on the Indians, killing seven, according to report made later by the Crows. Fleeing toward their horses the trappers secured mounts, and drove the loose stock backward over the trail.

Joseph L. Meek, who related most of these details to Mrs. Victor, says Godin was in charge of the party, though this is hardly probable, considering the number of men involved and the importance of the mission. General Dodge was evidently told by Bridger himself that he was in charge of the party. The trappers were well nigh overcome with fatigue and hunger, but were sustained by the sense of success.

Once started again on their journey, Fitzpatrick left the trappers and with one companion returned to St. Louis to bring on the merchandise for the summer trading rendezvous, which had been tentatively planned for the Green River valley. Sublette and Bridger proceeded with the trappers into the Yellowstone and thence the upper Missouri valleys, being the dreaded land of the Blackfoot warriors.

Working all streams assiduously on the way, and advancing on a rather wide front, furs were gathered in large quantities, and because of military precautions they were not greatly molested by the Indians. The general route was almost precisely the same as in the previous year, and thus Bridger most probably had another visit to the Geyser basins of the Yellowstone Park area, doubtless taking with him other friends.

Sojourning briefly at Pierre's Hole, the party swept forward up Salt River, covering a segment of the Bear River, and thence to the Green River basin, securing as a stopping place a convenient location both for the gathering trappers and the forthcoming caravan of supplies. Fraeb and Gervais had come out of the Colorado mountains, ascended the Green River, and met the Bridger-Sublette trappers at the rendezvous.

But Fitzpatrick was not in evidence with his supply train. The trappers, living from hand to mouth, from one season to the next, for want of storage facilities and permanency of establishment, were becoming destitute. Blankets were depleted, clothing was unfit for another winter, ammunition was low, and general supplies, including tobacco and that other nuisance, liquor, were imperatively demanded.

Accordingly, a relief and searching party was ordered eastward down the Sweetwater and the Platte. Fraeb, who had been longest without contact with new goods from St. Louis, was designated to lead the succoring and searching party, but he first engaged the services of an Indian medicine man, in all seriousness. To make the "medicine" flow freely and authoritatively, the payment in advance of a horse or two was necessary, and the medicine chief had to go through all his original ceremony of being made a medicine man in the first place.

This took several days, but the result was a very gratifying announcement from the chief, that Fitzpatrick was alive, but was on the wrong road. This was especially gratifying to those who believed in the medicine, and also to others who were anxious for the Fraeb party to be off. Reaching the Black Hills, south of the Platte in southeastern Wyoming, Fraeb, accompanied by Meek, Reese, Ebarts and Nelson, rested themselves briefly, and shortly Fitzpatrick showed up with his supply train intact, though much jaded.

At St. Louis he had been induced by his former partners and associates to accompany them by way of Santa Fe. Indians attacked them at frequent intervals, and on the Cimmaron River Jedediah S. Smith was ambushed and slain while alone at a drinking hole. After reaching the vicinity of Santa Fe, Fitzpatrick was almost as far from Green River as when he left St. Louis. Moving northward along the foot of the Rocky Mountains, he crossed Colorado and finally arrived in the trapper's realm too late to reach Green River.

Couriers were dispatched to the Sublette-Bridger contingent, and all parties gathered again as winter was

settling down on the mountains in the sheltered basin of Powder River. Suspicious followers up the Platte disturbed the peace of Fitzpatrick and Fraeb, as they moved finally over to the Powder, though the much delayed and much appreciated trading rendezvous occupied their time for some days; and then they were painfully aware of the oppressive presence of a grave competitor.

The American Fur Company, with unlimited funds to support it, was in the field, and ultimately was to drive the Rocky Mountain Fur Company onto the Rocky Mountain rocks. Three field leaders were abroad with an army of men, and a fortune in supplies; two of the leaders, Vanderburg and Drips, being then and there ensconced with their outfit within the confines of the Rocky Mountain company's encampment area, and manifesting no compromising attitude.

Fitzpatrick and his men had harassed Peter Skene Ogden the previous autumn, and retribution was now overtaking them most bitterly. Vanderburg and Drips sullenly and brazenly avowed their intention of following the experienced trappers in the spring in order to acquaint themselves with the fur country, and the manner of gathering the peltries.

Enraged beyond expression, but without the ability or desire to break into actual warfare with rifles, Fitzpatrick, Bridger, Sublette, Fraeb and Gervais held a council and decided to elude their competitors at any cost. Decamping hastily, they fled into the mountains, crossing through South Pass, traversing Green River valley, and thence gaining the seclusion of the Snake River region, they settled into winter quarters, after winter was heavily upon them, at the Forks of the Snake (Rexburg), some miles below Pierre's Hole. Here they finished the winter of 1831-1832 in company with the Nez Perce and Flathead Indians, with whom they did some profitable trading.

CHAPTER XX

THE BATTLE OF PIERRE'S HOLE

THE spring trapping season of 1832 sent the Rocky Mountain Fur Company into the branches of the Snake River generally, the parties converging on the Bear River by way of Salt and John Day's rivers. Passing down the Bear, they dropped in for a visit at their old love, the Salt Lake rendezvous. A few of Ogden's trappers were still there, including some of the Indians who had assisted Ogden.

A Rockaway chief named Gray, and seven of his tribesmen, engaged themselves to the Rocky Mountain company as trappers, according to Meek, and all set out again for the upper reaches of the Bear toward the Green River basin. Very soon, however, they were consternated to meet up with Vanderburg and Drips, with their caravan, who had found their way across the divide in the tracks of the old trappers.

It was a most trying situation. Vanderburg and Drips consorted with the trappers and Indian followers, trading for the furs which were being held for the merchandise of the Rocky Mountain company, then on the way from the frontier. They gained from the trappers their most valuable secrets of the business; and succeeding in ascertaining that the summer trading rendezvous was scheduled for Pierre's Hole, they set their stakes to reach that point without fail.

Retributive justice was getting in its perfect work on Fitzpatrick and his company, for their attitude toward Ogden previously. Another desperate attempt to elude the American company was decided upon, when another difficulty overshadowed their aims for the moment. Chief Gray's daughter claimed that she had been subjected to some sort of indignity by one of the trappers, and she complained to her father.

The result was a melee in which Gray stabbed

Milton G. Sublette so seriously he was expected to die. Meek was left in charge of Sublette in the capacity of nurse and the trappers slipped into the upper Green River wilderness.

For forty days and nights Sublette hung in the balance, but finally Meek and mother nature lifted him onto his horse again and they were off to find their associates. They were suddenly confronted with a band of warring Snakes, and only seemed to delay death by an artful ruse of dashing pell mell into the village and entering the sacred medicine lodge, where no blood could be shed. After much whetting of knives and tempers, the Snakes decided on a couple of murders.

One old chief, Gotia, however, demurred seriously, and at dusk managed to have a stampede of horses to divert the warriors while he spirited Sublette and Meek into the forest where a beautiful Snake maiden, named Umentucken Tukutsey Undewatsey, or The Mountain Lamb, awaited with prancing steeds. Cautioned to speed if they wished to live, and keep it up on the morrow if they still had no desire to perish, they obeyed to the letter, terminating the first lap of their eventful journey at Pierre's Hole in a few days.

The second lap of this journey ended a little later when Sublette took The Mountain Lamb to wife; and the third and last lap was covered when Sublette left the mountains for good and the Lamb accommodatingly became Mrs. Meek.

Terminating the spring trap, Fitzpatrick and Bridger entered Pierre's Hole and found there to welcome them their hated rivals, Vanderburg and Drips, with their merchandise ready for barter. Fitzpatrick fled across the mountains to meet William L. Sublette, who was advancing with the Rocky Mountain company's merchandise, and urge him to hasten his steps before the new company gobbled the business. Impatient to get things ready for the fall hunt, ahead of the new company, Fitzpatrick hurried back toward Pierre's Hole.

William L. Sublette had fallen in with Nathaniel J. Wyeth and a company of tenderfeet from Boston, bound

for the Columbia River whence they thought to enter the salmon fisheries. Thus his enlarged party trudged forward, entering Pierre's Hole ahead of schedule with sixty men and one hundred and eighty horses in his own caravan. Before Fitzpatrick left the Hole to meet Sublette, he had offered to divide the territory with Vanderburg and Drips, but on their refusal he began to play his strongest cards.

Thus great suspicion was aroused when Fitzpatrick was not on hand at the rendezvous; Bridger thought he was with Sublette and Sublette had seen him go on ahead in haste. Fortunately he arrived shortly, in the company of two Iroquois half-breeds, having been detained by an adventure with hostile Indians, with whom he left his pack horse rather than his scalp.

The Pierre's Hole rendezvous was thus a great occasion, with organized and free trappers, Indians and adventurers numbering about a thousand, equipped with two or three thousand horses and mules. With this setting, in this beautiful valley some fifteen by thirty miles in extent, most authorities follow Irving (20) in describing the battle of Pierre's Hole between the trappers and the Blackfoot Indians.

The trading terminated, on July 17, 1832, Milton G. Sublette headed a trapper band of seventeen moving southward, accompanied by a band of free trappers and by Wyeth and his New England adventurers. They encamped together about eight miles distant, but still within the basin. Early on the 18th they descried a long line of horsemen pouring down a defile into the Hole near them.

The strangers were thought to be Fontenelle and party, who were momentarily expected to join Vanderburg and Drips. But Wyeth, reconnoitering with a field glass, perceived that they were Indians, numbering about one hundred and fifty, including women and children. They were Blackfoot tribesmen, the warriors wearing war paint.

Antoine Godin, whose father had been killed by the Blackfeet, and a Flathead Indian who also had an un-

dying grudge against these hornets of the mountains, rode boldly forward as the Blackfoot war chief advanced without weapons, and bearing the calumet or peace pipe. As Godin reached for the pipe, he ordered the Flathead to fire, thus murdering the chief, whose blanket and other personal effects Godin got before retreating. The act was presumably justified on the well known fact that the Blackfeet never smoked a peace pipe with any but ulterior and selfish motives, being unbound by the practice.

Immediately the Blackfoot Indians sought shelter in a wooded swamp near by, in which vines and undergrowth obscured them completely. Here the women began entrenching the warriors with ditches and barricades, and the red men began a heavy fire toward the trappers. Wyeth established his men in approved style behind barracks of their baggage, who, like children, were admonished not to leave the place or show themselves above their blind.

An express to the main camp brought the hundreds of trappers and Indians on the gallop. Captain William L. Sublette and Robert Campbell threw themselves into the fight, appointing each other administrator of the other's estate in case of death as they raced along, with coats off and sleeves rolled up. Of course the Blackfeet were surprised that the valley should yield so many enemies, and found themselves for once in a most difficult place.

Captain Sublette in his impetuosity urged an attack on the swamp, though even the Indian allies accustomed to fighting a concealed enemy considered such a move in the present circumstances foolhardy. Thus Captain Sublette and Campbell dashed forward, followed shortly by Sinclair, leader of the free trappers. Crawling like badgers through the vines, grass and brush, taking turns at breaking the path, the three penetrated to a sight of the Blackfoot barricade and fort. Instantly a Blackfoot bullet killed Sinclair, who was carried to the rear by trappers who had followed their leaders by that time.

Sublette then took the lead, and noticing a Blackfoot warrior's eye at a peep-hole, beaded it instantly. Pointing out the peep-hole to Campbell, while he loaded his gun, Sublette was stunned by a heavy leaden ball in the shoulder. Campbell thus carried Sublette out of the Blackfoot range, his place being taken by others, among whom must have been James Bridger, Fraeb, Baptiste, Godin, Fitzpatrick and other trappers whose bravery was never questioned.

So numerous and scattered were the attackers that a dangerous cross fire resulted across the swamp, Wyeth himself having entered the thicket on the far side with some Indian allies. Watching the peep-holes and the return fire, the trappers were enabled gradually to silence the guns within the enclosure; and daring Nez Perce and Flathead Indians raced forward from time to time, tearing away the precious Blackfoot war blankets as trophies from the barricade. They would have fired the fort but for their desire to possess the trophies, which they felt sure would come to them finally.

When all seemed quiet within the dismal fort, a voice rose out of it from a Blackfoot chief, in an oratorical effort of encomiums on his own people and epithets on his enemies. He declared that those hungry for fighting should continue, even after the speaker and his band were dead, as there would be four hundred of his tribesmen upon whom to satisfy this greed. In the rapid translation of this speech into English, through the various dialects and Indian tongues, it was understood that the chief was saying four hundred Blackfoot lodges, or several times that number of warriors, were at the moment attacking the non-combatants up at the Pierre's Hole rendezvous.

This misunderstanding, combined with the fall of night, sent all but a few guardsmen back to the main encampment eight miles distant. The resumption of the attack in the morning of July 19, proved a fine fizzle, for the surviving Blackfoot party had crept out and away to safety and parts unknown, taking with them sixteen

dead warriors, as afterward reported. Ten bodies had been left, and about thirty-two dead horses were found. Some of the horses belonged to the trappers, including the pack horse sacrificed by Fitzpatrick. The attackers' loss was Sinclair and seven Indians, a half-dozen others being wounded.

Irving relates the touching story of the Indian woman found near the abandoned fort, leaning stolidly against a tree by the body of her dead lover, totally oblivious of her enemies or surroundings. Of course she "was of noble form and features," either lost in grief, or motionless under a proud spirit, making a fine sight. A heartless Indian attacker felled her with a bullet. But Meek told Mrs. Victor that "the woman's leg had been broken by a ball, and she was unable to move from the spot where she leaned. When the trappers approached her, she stretched out her hands supplicatingly, crying out in a wailing voice, 'Kill me! Kill me! O white men, kill me!' but this the trappers had no disposition to do. While she was entreating them, and they refusing, a ball from some vengeful Nez Perce or Flathead put an end to her sufferings."

The assembled trappers remained at Pierre's Hole several days awaiting the expected attack from the Blackfoot tribe, which did not materialize. Nathaniel J. Wyeth's physician dressed Captain Sublette's wound, the bullet from which had glanced out, striking another in the head without great harm. His departure for St. Louis was delayed, however, and seven or eight men who were to accompany him grew impatient and preceded him, several of them meeting death in Jackson Hole at the hands of the Blackfeet a few days later. Captain Sublette got away later with his fur packs, reaching St. Louis safely.

"We remember to have seen them with their band, about two or three months afterward," says Washington Irving, speaking for himself and not for Captain Bonneville, "passing through a skirt of woodland in the upper part of Missouri. Their long cavalcade stretched in single file for nearly half a mile. Sublette still wore his arm

in a sling. The mountaineers in their rude hunting dresses, armed with rifles and roughly mounted, and leading their pack horses down a hill of the forest, looked like banditti returning with plunder. On the top of some of the packs were perched several half-breed children, perfect little imps, with wild black eyes glaring from among elf locks. These, I was told, were children of the trappers; pledges of love from their squaw spouses in the wilderness."

CHAPTER XXI

THE ARROWHEAD IN BRIDGER'S FLESH

MILTON G. SUBLETTE and his brigade, including Joseph L. Meek, set out again for the southwest on July 23, 1832, accompanied as previously by Nathaniel J. Wyeth and company. Thomas Fitzpatrick and James Bridger set out at the same time for the north and northwest, intending to cover Henry's fork of the Snake, and journey thence across the divide into the Missouri headwaters, of Blackfoot infamy.

Vanderburg grew impatient at the non-arrival of his collaborator, Fontenelle, at Pierre's Hole, at the close of the battle, and when he observed Fitzpatrick and Bridger in preparations to depart, he fled to Captain Bonneville's fort, just established on the upper Green River, where he found Fontenelle. Equipping himself and his men for the fall hunt from Fontenelle's goods, Vanderburg and Drips set out post haste on the trail of Fitzpatrick and Bridger, about August 6.

"Nothing could equal the chagrin of Fitzpatrick and Bridger," says Irving, (20) "at being dogged by their inexperienced rivals, especially after their offer to divide the country with them. They tried in every way to blind and baffle them; to steal a march upon them, or lead them on a wrong scent; but all in vain. Vanderburg made up by activity and intelligence for his ignorance of the country; was always wary, always on the alert; discovered every movement of his rivals, however secret, and was not to be eluded or misled.

"Fitzpatrick and his colleagues now lost all patience; since the others persisted in following them, they determined to give them an unprofitable chase, and to sacrifice the hunting season rather than share the products with their rivals. They accordingly took up their line of march down the course of the Missouri, keeping the main Blackfoot trail, and tramping doggedly forward without stopping to set a single trap. The others beat the hoof after them for some time, but by degrees began to perceive that they were on a wild-geese chase and getting into a country perfectly bar-

ren to the trapper. They now came to a halt and bethought themselves how to make up for lost time and improve the remainder of the season. It was thought best to divide their forces and try different trapping grounds. While Drips went in the one direction, Vanderburg, with about fifty men, proceeded in another. The latter in his headlong march had got into the very heart of the Blackfoot country, yet seems to have been unconscious of his danger.

"As his scouts were out one day they came upon the traces of a recent band of savages. There were the deserted fires still smoking, surrounded by the carcasses of the buffalo just killed. It was evident a party of Blackfeet had been frightened from their hunting camp, and had retreated, probably to seek re-enforcements. The scouts hastened back to the camp and told Vanderburg what they had seen. He made light of the alarm, and, taking nine men with him, galloped off to reconnoiter for himself. He found the deserted hunting camp just as they had represented it; there lay the carcasses of the buffalo, partly dismembered; there were the smouldering fires, still sending up their wreaths of smoke; everything bore traces of recent and hasty retreat; and gave reason to believe that the savages were still lurking in the neighborhood.

"With needless daring, Vanderburg put himself upon their trail, to trace them to their place of concealment. It led him over prairies, and through skirts of woodland, until it entered a dark and dangerous ravine. Vanderburg pushed in, without hesitation, followed by his little band. They soon found themselves in a gloomy dell, between steep banks overhung with trees, where the profound silence was only broken by the tramp of their own horses.

"Suddenly the horrid war-whoop burst on their ears, mingled with the sharp report of rifles, and a legion of savages sprang from their concealments, yelling and shaking their buffalo robes to frighten the horses. Vanderburg's horse fell, mortally wounded by the first discharge. In his fall he pinned his rider to the ground, who called in vain upon his men to assist in extricating him. One was shot down and scalped a few paces distant; most of the others were severely wounded and sought their safety in flight. The savages approached to dispatch the unfortunate leader as he lay struggling beneath his horse. He had still his rifle in his hand and his pistols in his belt. The first savage that advanced received the contents of the rifle in his breast and fell dead on the spot; but before Vanderburg could draw a pistol a blow from a tomahawk laid him prostrate and he was dispatched by repeated wounds.

"Such was the fate of Major Henry Vanderburg, one of the best and worthiest leaders of the American Fur Company, who

by his manly bearing and dauntless courage is said to have made himself universally popular among the bold-hearted rovers of the wilderness.¹⁶

"Those of the little band who escaped fled in consternation to the camp and spread direful reports of the force and ferocity of the enemy. The party, being without a head, were in complete confusion and dismay, and made a precipitate retreat without attempting to recover the remains of their butchered leader. They made no halt until they reached the encampment of the Pend d'Oreilles, or Hanging-ears, where they offered a reward for the recovery of the body, but without success; it never could be found.

"In the meantime Fitzpatrick and Bridger, of the Rocky Mountain Company, fared but little better than their rivals. In their eagerness to mislead them they had betrayed themselves into danger, and got into a region infested with the Blackfeet. They soon found that foes were on the watch for them; but they were experienced in Indian warfare and not to be surprised at night, nor drawn into an ambush in the daytime. As the evening advanced the horses were all brought in and picketed and a guard was stationed around the camp. At the earliest streak of day one of the leaders would remount his horse and gallop off full speed for about half a mile, then look around for Indian trails, to ascertain whether there had been any Indian lurkers round the camp; returning slowly, he would reconnoiter every ravine and thicket where there might be an ambush. This done, he would gallop off in an opposite direction and repeat the same scrutiny. Finding all things safe, the horses would be turned loose to graze, but always under the eye of a guard.

"A caution equally vigilant was observed in the march, on approaching any defile or place where an enemy might lie in wait; and scouts were always kept in the advance or along the ridges and rising grounds on the flanks.

"At length, one day, a large band of Blackfeet appeared in the open field, but in the vicinity of rocks and cliffs. They kept at a wary distance, but made friendly signs. The trappers replied in the same way, but likewise kept aloof. A small party of Indians now advanced bearing the pipe of peace; they were met by an equal number of white men, and they formed a group midway between the two bands, where the pipe was circulated from hand to hand, and smoked with all due ceremony.

"An instance of natural affection took place at this pacific meeting. Among the free trappers in the Rocky Mountain band was a spirited young Mexican named Loretto, who, in the course of his wanderings, had ransomed a beautiful Blackfoot girl from a band of Crows by whom she had been captured. He made her

16. Mr. Irving's regard for the dead has, of course, allowed him to spread Vanderburg's popularity over entirely too much territory.

his wife, after the Indian style, and she had followed his fortunes ever since with the most devoted affection.

"Among the Blackfoot warriors who advanced with the calumet of peace she recognized a brother. Leaving her infant with Loretto she rushed forward and threw herself upon her brother's neck, who clasped his long-lost sister to his heart with a warmth of affection but little compatible with the reputed stoicism of the savage.

"While this scene was taking place Bridger left the main body of trappers and rode slowly toward the group of smokers with his rifle resting across the pommel of his saddle. The chief of the Blackfeet stepped forward to meet him. From some unfortunate feeling of distrust Bridger cocked his rifle just as the chief was extending his hand in friendship. The quick ear of the savage caught the click of the lock; in a twinkling he grasped the barrel, forced the muzzle downward, and the contents were discharged into the earth at his feet. His next movement was to wrest the weapon from the hand of Bridger and fell him with it to the earth. He might have found this no easy task had not the unfortunate leader (Bridger) received two arrows in his back during the struggle.

"The chief now sprang into the vacant saddle (Bridger's) and galloped off to his band. A wild hurry-scurry scene ensued; each party took to the bank, the rocks and the trees, to gain favorable positions, and an irregular firing was kept up on either side without much effect. The Indian girl had been hurried off by her people at the outbreak of the affray. She would have returned, through the dangers of the fight to her husband and child, but was prevented by her brother. The young Mexican saw her struggles and her agony and heard her piercing cries. With a generous impulse he caught up the child in his arms, rushed forward, regardless of Indian shaft or rifle, and placed it in safety upon her bosom.

"Even the savage heart of the Blackfoot chief was reached by this noble deed. He pronounced Loretto a madman for his temerity, but bade him depart in peace. The young Mexican hesitated; he urged to have his wife restored to him, but her brother interfered, and the countenance of the chief grew dark. The girl, he said, belonged to his tribe, she must remain with her people. Loretto would still have lingered, but his wife implored him to depart, lest his life should be endangered. It was with the greatest reluctance that he returned to his companions.

"The approach of night put an end to the skirmishing fire of the adverse parties, and the savages drew off without renewing their hostilities. We cannot but remark that both in this affair and that of Pierre's Hole the affray commenced by a hostile act on the part of white men at the moment when the Indian warrior was extending the hand of amity. In neither instance, as far as

circumstances have been stated to us by different persons, do we see any reason to suspect the savage chiefs of perfidy in their overtures of friendship." . . .

This last observation, while bearing a grain of truth, is somewhat out of joint with Irving's general characterization of the Blackfoot people elsewhere in his writing.¹⁷ But to let him finish.

"A word to conclude the romantic incident of Loretto and his Indian bride. A few months subsequent to this event just related the young Mexican settled his accounts with the Rocky Mountain Company and obtained his discharge. He then left his comrades and set off to join his wife and child among her people; and we understand that, at the time we are writing these pages, he resides at a trading-house established of late by the American Fur Company in the Blackfoot country, where he acts as an interpreter and has his Indian girl with him."

Fitzpatrick and Bridger continued in the Missouri River country of the Blackfoot, taking many beaver during the autumn and early winter. They had worked their way into Beaverhead valley, on the headwaters of Jefferson fork of the Missouri, whence they passed over the continental divide, and met up with Milton G. Sublette and party sojourning with Captain Bonneville at his new post at the Salmon River forks. Proceeding southeastward, they reached the forks of the Snake, forty or fifty miles below Pierre's Hole, where they settled for the winter of 1832-1833.

In extricating the Blackfoot arrows from his body, Bridger was unable to secure the metal point or head of one, which was deeply embedded in the flesh. He carried it for three years, when it was removed at the Green River rendezvous by Dr. Marcus Whitman.

While Fitzpatrick and Bridger were leading Vanderburg and Drips on the fatal goose-chase, they were not wandering quite so aimlessly perhaps as Washington Irving would have us believe. They took a goodly number of furs on the way, and at the same time explored much new territory, passing for the first time up the Yellowstone River. This then, without question, became Bridger's first

17. See Chapter 19.

visit to the Hot Springs terraces, and probably his first visit to the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, with its beautiful waterfalls. Reaching Yellowstone Lake (19) from a new angle, they chose to retrace their route northward, at least in a general way, to the Three Forks district, where the Vanderburg death and the Bridger-Blackfoot scrap occurred.

CHAPTER XXII

WYETH DICKERS WITH TRAPPERS

OWING to the numerous population settled at the Forks of the Snake River, the forage for the trappers' horses was inadequate. It thus became necessary in January, 1833, to transfer the general encampment to the mouth of the Portneuf (Pocatello). The weather was bitterly cold on the way, and Joseph L. Meek bared his body from the waist up, that The Mountain Lamb and a tiny lambkin, then comprising the family of Milton G. Sublette, might be better protected from the cold.

But if grass was plentiful on the plains at the junction of the Portneuf, fuel was not; and with the intense and prolonged cold weather there was much suffering, especially among the Indians. The wild game was largely driven from the valley by the cold, and the sojourners were thus deprived of their usual supply of meat. Hunters scoured the country far and wide, bringing in bears, beavers, and any other kind of meat the region afforded.

Toward spring Kit Carson and a companion drifted into the camp, having wintered at Fort Uinta (Utah) on a trading reconnaissance from Taos. As if to celebrate this, the first appearance of this distinguished character in the literature of the West, a band of twenty Blackfoot thieves paid a professional call, and swept most of the trappers' horses from the grazing lands toward Blackfoot pastures undesignated. Among the horses "was James Bridger's favorite racehorse, Grohean, a Comanche steed of great speed and endurance," says Meek.

Bridger told off the names of about thirty of the most resolute trappers in the encampment, and led them in pursuit of the marauders, Kit Carson joining the party for good measure. The Indians were soon overtaken, but they had driven the stock on ahead, or had secreted it in a canyon. They pretended to want to talk peaceful measures, but they talked "crooked," as the trappers were

well aware, and a fight ensued. Falling back into defenses already prepared, the Indians put up a strong fight, but the aggressors were none the less energetic. Two Indians were killed, and Kit Carson carried away the only wound received in battle in his entire career. The Blackfoot scoundrels crept away under cover of the night, and the trappers could do nothing but give up the chase.

The horses were largely replaced by purchases from the Nez Perce (Pierced-nose) Indians, and the trapping brigades departed on their spring expeditions. Milton G. Sublette and Baptiste Gervais, with twenty-two trappers excellently equipped (20), journeyed westward into the productive Malade valley, finding more or less conflict with the trappers employed by Captain Bonneville, who was becoming a very serious contender for fur business. Joseph L. Meek surrounded himself with a few favorites and trapped the Snake, Bear and Salt Lake basins.

James Bridger and Henry Fraeb swung southeastward up the Portneuf, across a bight of the Bear, on across the Green River valley, and into northwestern Colorado. Several large streams rising on the shoulders of the Rockies were trapped with profit, the party then turning north in the neighborhood of the Medicine Bow range, probably trapping the Platte River down to the caravan road to the mountains by way of the Sweetwater. In this region their old enemies, the Arikaras, stole a large number of their horses for old times' sake; but Bridger managed to get back through the South Pass in time for the market rendezvous.

The trail was now well broken, for the previous summer Captain Bonneville had traversed the route with twenty-eight heavily laden wagons, being the first wagons west of the divide. He had one hundred and ten men, and an immense number of horses, mules and work cattle. Settling on the Green River six miles west of the present town of Daniel, Wyoming, he erected a trapper's post; but because of the reputed inclemency of the winters on the Green, he had in a few months moved on over to the Salmon.

Fort Bonneville was the general site of the trading rendezvous for 1833, Robert Campbell arriving from St. Louis with the merchandise caravan about mid-July. Nathaniel J. Wyeth (21) says Captain Bonneville was there with twenty-two and one-half packs of beaver, but that he was in poor circumstances, having few horses and little equipment. A trapper leader named Harris had seven packs of beaver furs, but his men were afoot, their horses having been stolen east of the mountains by the Arikaras. Drips and Fontenelle of the American Fur Company were established on the east bank of the Green at the site of Daniel town, having one hundred and sixty men, plenty of horses and fifty-one beaver packs. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company's brigades were assembled about four miles below the American Company, having collected fifty-five beaver packs, with one party still afield. Fifty-five men were in the camp. Independent trappers swelled the numbers to nearly three hundred, besides the Indians, who were numerous.

Bitter rivals who for a year past had striven incessantly to distress, hamper, impoverish, outtrap, outtrade, and outwit one another, were luxuriously swaggering about the rendezvous, strangely enough trying to outlie, outbrag, outdrink, outfght, outshoot and generally outdo one another in a chivalrous saturnalia which fortunately came but once a year. A tribe of Shoshones and another of Snakes added their young women on whom the trappers outvied one another in bestowing their attentions and lurid-hued blankets and trinkets. But the serious needs of the trappers, for blankets, knives, guns, ammunition, traps, and other necessities which were gratified, saved the occasion from being one of evanescent joy.

"I should have been proud of my countrymen if you could have seen the American Fur Company or the party of Mr. R. Campbell," says Wyeth. "For efficiency of goods, men, animals and arms, I do not believe the fur business has afforded a better example for discipline. I have sold my animals and shall make a boat and float down the Yellowstone and Missouri and see what the world is made of there. Mr. William Sublette and Mr. Campbell have come up the Missouri and established a trading fort at each location of the posts of the American Fur Company with a view to a strong

opposition. Good luck to their quarrels. . . . A Snake village is here with us. I find Bonneville's connections are responsible. He lost one entire party among the Crows, that is (including) the horses and of course all the beaver. A party under Bridger and Frapp (Fraeb) also lost their horses by the Arikaras, also Harris' Party lost theirs by the same Indians, who have taken a permanent residence on the Platte, and left the Missouri, which is the reason I go by the last named river. Harris' party did not interfere with any of my plans south of the Snake River (dividing the territory).

"In my opinion, you would have been robbed of your goods and beaver if you had come here, although it is the west side of the mountains, for Green River empties into the Gulf of California. (Wyeth's friend was of the Hudson's Bay Company.) I give you this as an honest opinion which you can communicate to the Company. There is here a great majority of scoundrels. I should much doubt the personal safety of any one from your side of the house."

Wyeth also gives valuable information (21) about the financial circumstances of the new fur company with which Bridger was connected. "Smith, Sublette and Jackson . . . sold out to Milton Sublette, Frapp, Jervais, Bridger and Thomas Fitzpatrick, and in the style of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, for \$30,000, dividing among them about \$60,000 for, I think, three years' business. This last firm has continued the business since, have paid the purchase money, and have cleared their stock of goods and animals, requisite for the business in the country; but not being business men, and unknown where the goods are to be bought, have been dependent upon others for their supplies, for which they have paid enormously to Mr. William L. Sublette, brother to a member of their firm. They have been together three years and have made two returns amounting to two hundred and ten packs of furs, value, net about \$80,000, and received two outfits of goods, first cost about \$6,000, for which they have paid about \$30,000, and for returning their furs about \$8,000, leaving them, after paying the first purchase, about \$12,000, some of which must be due to men who have not received their pay in goods, leaving them with little property except their horses, mules and traps, and a few goods and unavailable property.

"Since the commencement of this species of business several persons have attempted it, but are now all out of the way except Messrs. Drips and Fontenelle, fitted out by the American Fur Company, and Messrs. Bonneville and Company, fitted out by men in New York. Neither of these last named companies, as far as I can ascertain, have made money to any great extent, owing to enormous prices paid for goods. The country to which these parties resort is extensive and there is plenty of room for them and many more, and if they

made a little money, I do think, if proper means are used, that much could be made."

Wyeth wrote this letter making arrangements for financial credit in an attempt to break into the fur trade himself. He had made proposals to Captain Bonneville without acceptance, and then turned with overtures to certain members of the Rocky Mountain Company, especially Milton G. Sublette, with whom he had traveled from Pierre's Hole, after the battle, by way of Salt Lake and the Humboldt basin, to the lower Snake, the previous year, and become intimately acquainted.

Much has been said and written about the repudiation by Bridger and his associates of a contract alleged to have been formally entered into with Wyeth to accept from him \$3,000 worth of merchandise in the season of 1834. Thus the elements of this contract are presented in Wyeth's own words, so that the sequel may be better understood. The instrument was dated August 14, 1833, on the Big Horn River, and was signed by Fitzpatrick and Sublette only, for a firm of five members, one of whom at least (Bridger) was present but did not sign or mark.

"I now proceed to state what I propose to do if I can find the means. . . . The inclosed contract was made with Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Sublette, of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, when I was in doubt whether I would be able to perform it, but knew I would be able to pay the default. The contract, as you will perceive, will amount to little more than carrying me into the Indian country free of expense, and procuring the business of a very efficient concern; in this light I hold it to be valuable.

"I propose to fulfill this contract. This done, if the Rocky Mountain Fur Company will sell me their remaining furs at such rate as I can make money, or will pay me for transporting them to St. Louis, I will fit out a party sufficient to send them down with all other furs then on hand. That they will do so, I believe, because if I supply them with goods, no other party will be there to do it, and they will not have the means of doing it themselves in the country.

"If they should not do so, then I will proceed to a safe country on the Columbia River, where some furs may be traded and there leave them with a few men, leaving some men and a trusty person to keep them, and trade as many more as he can. The residue of my party (their apparatus having been brought out at the same time with Sublette's goods) will be employed in the trapping business."

Wyeth wanted a monopoly on transporting furs or the purchase of them; and he intended to establish trading posts and to send out trappers on his own initiative, as if this offered any advantage over the existing arrange-

ment with Capt. William L. Sublette! The Captain, by the way, was at the moment on the way up the Missouri River with a keel boat laden with supplies for the mountaineers, his associate, Campbell, having preceded him by land.

On July 24, 1833, the fur caravan moved out of the rendezvous in two or three sections, headed by James Bridger and Thomas Fitzpatrick, as caravan managers, Milton G. Sublette, the associate, being also with the party. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company had but about one-fourth as much fur as General Ashley had from his first rendezvous, which traversed a similar route in 1825. Captain Bonneville's lieutenant, Mr. Cerre, accompanied the party to have the advantage of the protection and guidance, and one or two free trappers were also in the party.

Wyeth kept a diary on the journey (21), by means of which the route is traced across the Sandy creeks, through South Pass, northward along the mountain athwart the filaments of Wind River, Greybull River and Stinking (Shoshone) River successively, and thence to the point of embarkation on the Big Horn in bull boats. While on the headwaters of the Wind River, James Bridger evidently dispatched a scouting party of four to retrieve Wyeth and others, who had mistaken the route. It seems that one of them had tethered his horses together and sat down to rest. Falling asleep, Indians surprised him, stealing seven horses and shooting a bullet through his cheek and an arrow into his back. One of these four men was named Charboneau, possibly a son of Sacajawea, woman guide for Lewis and Clark, though this is only conjecture.

Captain Bonneville and a party of fifty-six trappers set out one day behind the main party, traveling in the same direction; they overtook the main party early in August and thereafter all traveled together. Fitzpatrick and Bridger were suspiciously silent as to their trapping plans, and Captain Bonneville's curiosity got the better of him, and he sent scouts and hunters ahead secretly to the realm he intended to trap. Bonneville kept on,

and at the point of embarkation, assisted Cerre in making the bull boats and getting the furs afloat. Campbell and his men constructed the boats for the furs of the Rocky Mountain Company, and Wyeth and Sublette, with two Indians, entered Wyeth's boat.

Fort Cass, a new trading post of the American Fur Company, three miles below the Big Horn on the Yellowstone, was passed on August 17; this post was in charge of Samuel Tullock, formerly with the Rocky Mountain Company; his supplies were brought up the river in large keelboats, and the post was well supplied and in an excellent location, having been strongly built the previous autumn, 1832. Fort Union, at the mouth of the Yellowstone, was reached August 24, 1833, the American Fur Company having erected a splendid establishment at this place, sacred to the beginnings of the Rocky Mountain Company. On the 27th, a short distance below Fort Union, Wyeth and Sublette met Capt. William L. Sublette with a large boatload of merchandise intended for competitive trade against the American Fur Company. Milton G. Sublette remained with his brother, moving on to St. Louis and thence to Boston later in the winter.

CHAPTER XXIII

ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR COMPANY PASSES

THOMAS FITZPATRICK and James Bridger reconnoitered about the mouth of the Big Horn, after the embarkation of the fur packs, making an inspection of Tullock's establishment (Fort Cass) to observe the footsteps of the enemy company penetrating the fur country. Both Bridger and Fitzpatrick were skilled mountain men, who were as princes of industry in the Indian wilderness, but this frontier establishment of a concern that was spreading its powerful tentacles across the broad spaces so well known to these men, indicated the approach of the end of the palmy days of the old company.

Fortunately for all concerned, Captain Bonneville's poaching by sending parties secretly in advance was in a region of no present interest to Fitzpatrick and Bridger. They moved across the Rosebud onto the Tongue for a conference with the Crows, to gain permission for the fall hunt on the Tongue and the Powder Rivers. But Tullock was devotedly courting the Crow business, and evidently frowned darkly upon the passage of his old associates, now his enemies in business, into his coveted territory.

"Before I had time for form or ceremony of any kind," Chittenden quotes Fitzpatrick, "they (Crows) robbed me of my men and of everything I possessed." Captain Stuart, the adventurer with the party, wrote that "Fitzpatrick was robbed of one hundred horses, all his merchandise, some beaver and traps, his capote (a coat-shirt), and even his watch. The party can consequently make no hunt this fall." Fitzpatrick charged the American Fur Company with being the hand in the mailed glove that devastated him, upon the confession of the Indians, and Tullock covertly accepted the responsibility but without proper effort at restoration.

Fitzpatrick's experiences with the Crows on this occa-

sion (which were undoubtedly shared or witnessed by Bridger) are briefly paraphrased from Irving as follows: On arrival at the Tongue River on September 5, 1833, with his twenty or thirty trappers, Fitzpatrick was visited by the chief of a large band of Crows, protesting friendship, and suggesting an encampment together. Suspecting something wrong in this unusual request, Fitzpatrick declined, pitching camp some three miles distant; but to maintain diplomatic relations, made a formal call on the chief in his lodge afterward. While on this errand, a band of young Crows visited the trappers' camp, overpowering Captain Stuart nominally in charge, and made off with the stock and other property. On the way back to their camp site, they met Fitzpatrick and forcibly took his personal effects, and part of his clothing, leaving him destitute and bare above the waist.

Irving states that Fitzpatrick protested vigorously to the chief, who returned to him "his horses and many of his traps, together with his rifles and a few rounds of ammunition for each man." Irving says Fitzpatrick then made all speed out of the Crow country, though pursued by Crows regretful that they had let so much property escape them at last. Meeting up with a lone trapper, the Crows contented themselves with exchanging an old buffalo robe for the helpless trapper's rifle, traps, and general accouterments.

An echo of this transaction, between Fitzpatrick and the Crows (or the American Fur Company), is heard in a letter written by Samuel Tullock January 8, 1834, quoted by Chittenden. "The forty-three beaver skins traded, marked 'R.M.F. Co.,' I would in the present instance give up if Mr. Fitzpatrick wishes to have them, on his paying the price the articles traded for them were worth on their arrival in the Crow village, and the expense of bringing the beaver in and securing it. My goods are brought into the country to trade and I would as willingly dispose of them to Mr. Fitzpatrick as to any one else for beaver or beaver's worth, if I get my price. I make this proposal as a favor, not as a matter of right, for I consider the Indians entitled to trade any beaver in their possession

to me or to any other trader." The echo, however, evidently returned to its voice.

Fitzpatrick's route out of the Crow country was by way of the Powder River, and it is safe to assume, with his personal resources pooled with those of James Bridger, he was able to secure sufficient traps before departing to make the trip worth while. Passing back over South Pass, the party maneuvered over the Green River basin, falling in with a band of Shoshones, in the neighborhood of La Barge Creek. Later they moved down to Hams Fork of Black's Fork of Green River, accompanied by the Indians, and here at the end of October, 1833, Captain Bonneville came upon them.

Bonneville had also been robbed east of the divide, and thus he had something in common with Fitzpatrick, though they were still sharp competitors, which in mountain tongue meant near-enemies. Thus while the stout little captain moved his trappers west to the Bear River, and spent the early winter on Bear Lake and at Soda or Beer Springs, it cannot be safely stated that Fitzpatrick accompanied him. However, we can only leave the latter up in the air, so to speak, for there is no record as to where the Rocky Mountain Fur Company settled into winter quarters for 1833-1834. Bonneville left his band at the mouth of the Portneuf, with the Bannocks, while he went to Fort Walla Walla and returned.

The route of the spring hunting expeditions of the Rocky Mountain men in 1834 is not known either, except that Joseph L. Meek, with a handful of men, accompanied a contingent of Captain Bonneville's men from Hams Fork in the autumn of 1833, westward across the Nevada plains, the Sierra Nevada mountains, and to Monterey, California. Passing thence southward during the winter and spring through southern California and across the lower Colorado River to the Mohave Indian settlements, they then descended to the Gila River. They then returned and ascended Bill Williams Fork, in southwestern Arizona, where to their surprise they came upon their old comrades, Henry Fraeb and Baptiste Gervais, and a party of trappers numbering sixty men.

Fraeb had set out from Hams Fork about the same time Meek turned west, and had journeyed southward working the branches of the Colorado through the winter without much loss of time. Together, the parties crossed directly over to the branches of the Little Colorado, whence they touched at the Moqui Indian villages. Skirting this desert country to the east, they kept to the high ground, following the spring season of 1834 on its northerly march, finally reaching the fertile fur country of the Rio Grande (Grand, now Colorado) headwaters in what was known to trappers as the South Park.

Some trouble was had with Comanche Indians on the way, probably on a detour toward Taos, but Kit Carson, who had fallen in with the party, lent his assistance and the fight was brief. Proceeding northward across northwestern Colorado, the combined parties reached the Green River basin, rejoining Captain Bonneville, Thomas Fitzpatrick, James Bridger and others who had spring-hunted in parts not stated, but probably in the upper Green and Snake River country.

Looking eastward and backward that spring, we see Milton G. Sublette and Nathaniel J. Wyeth, with a company of seventy men and two hundred and fifty horses, leaving St. Louis in the latter part of March, 1834, with merchandise for the mountains. John K. Townsend (22) of the party enters in his journal of May 8, 1834, "This morning Mr. Sublette left us to return to the settlements. He has been suffering for a considerable time with a fungus in one of his legs, and it has become so much worse since we started, in consequence of irritation caused by riding, that he finds it impossible to proceed. His departure has thrown a gloom over the whole camp. We all admired him for his amiable qualities, and his kind and obliging disposition."

This gloom doubtless reached the head of the party, Wyeth, who was depending on Milton G. to effect the disposal of his merchandise, and aid with profitable mountain contracts, on this journey. William L. Sublette had also left St. Louis just behind Wyeth and his brother Milton G. with merchandise for the mountains. On May

12th, or during the night, the elder Sublette scurried past Wyeth on the trail, making all haste to precede Wyeth to the mountains. Messages were exchanged by couriers, but Sublette maintained his lead of a day or more (22).

The establishment of Fort Laramie (Wyoming) at the Laramie River junction with the Platte is related by Wyeth (21). "June 1st (1834). Made fifteen miles to Laramie's Fork . . . forded this fork with ease and made eight miles up the Platte in afternoon. At the crossing we found thirteen of Sublette's men camped for the purpose of building a fort, he having gone ahead with his best animals, and the residue of his goods; he left about fourteen loads." Townsend records having seen the names of the two Sublettes, Bonneville, Fontenelle, Cerre, and others engraved on Independence Rock, which was passed June 7th, Sublette being "two days ahead."

Under date of June 19th, Wyeth writes: ". . . camped one mile above the mouth of Sandy on Green River or Seckkedee; on the night of the 17th I left camp to hunt Fitzpatrick, and slept on the prairie; in morning struck Green River and went down to the forks, and finding nothing went up again and found the rendezvous about twelve miles up, and, much to my astonishment, the goods which I had contracted to bring up to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, were refused by those honorable gentlemen. 20th. Made west, southwest, eight miles, then south by east fifteen miles to Hams Fork, running here southeast, and a small stream.

"27th. Moved up the river northwest ten miles; grass here pretty good; but little timber and none but willows for the last six miles. To July 3d. Same camp, then up Hams Fork ten miles northwest. Moved up the fork about west by south twelve miles; too many Indians with us for comfort or safety; they left their horses among ours, so it is impossible to guard any of them. 4th. (He moved over to the Muddy about twenty-one miles and) here we celebrated the 4th. I gave the men too much alcohol for peace; took a pretty hearty spree myself. At the camp we found Mr. Cerre and Mr. Walker, who were returning to St. Louis with the furs collected by Mr. Bonneville's company; about ten packs and men going down, to whom there is due about \$10,000."

Wyeth then moved out on the 5th, reaching the Bear, where he stopped for a respite at Beer or Soda Springs, on the 8th. He reached the Portneuf on the 12th, and Snake River on the 13th, which he descended about three miles, where on the 15th he "commenced building the fort." Wyeth was here some time, the next significant entry in his journal being August 6, 1834. "Having done as much as was requisite for the safety to the fort, and drank a bale of liquor, and named it Fort Hall in honor of the oldest member of our concern, we left it, and with it Mr. Evans

in charge of eleven men and fourteen horses and mules and three cows."

Wyeth had an order on the Rocky Mountain Company from Milton G. Sublette for \$500, personal funds advanced to Sublette, and for other expenditures. He also sent couriers ahead apprising the company of his presence, his plans, and his expectations, before reaching the Sandy. Since his actual words may be appreciated by the reader above a paraphrase, we will let Wyeth complete the story of this rendezvous, as far as he does in correspondence written from the place (21).

"Hams Fork of the Colorado of the West, July 1, 1834. . . . Messrs Tucker and Williams. Gentlemen: I arrived here on the 17th instant, and William Sublette arrived two days before me. This he was enabled to do by leaving one-half of his goods and horses on the route, which of course I could not do. On arrival, the Rocky Mountain Fur Company refused to receive the goods, alleging that they were unable to continue business longer, and that they have dissolved, but offered to pay the advances made to M. G. Sublette, and the forfeit. These terms I have been obliged to accept, although they would not even pay the interest on cash advances, for there is no law here. I have also sold a few goods at low prices. The proceeds of the forfeit and so forth and sales, after deducting the small amount for payment of wages of men who have gone home from this place, I have forwarded to Messrs. Von Phull and McGill, on St. Louis, subject to your order, in one draft four months from date, July 1, 1834, for \$864.12½, and for \$1,002.81 same date twelve months, both by Fitzpatrick, Sublette and Bridger, accepted by Sublette and Campbell of St. Louis.

"In addition to not fulfilling their agreement with me, every exertion is made to debauch my men, in which they have had some success, but I have hired enough of theirs to make up, and do not fear falling short of troops. These circumstances induced me to quit their neighborhood as soon as possible. . . .

"Hams Fork, July 1, 1834. [Letter to Mr. G. Sublette, meaning Milton G. Sublette.] Dear Sir: I arrived at the rendezvous at the mouth of the Sandy on the 17th of June. Fitzpatrick refused to receive the goods; he paid, however, the forfeit and the cash advance I made to you. This, however, is no satisfaction to me. I do not accuse you or him of any intentions of injuring me in this manner, when you made the contract, but I think he has been bribed to sacrifice my interests by better offers from your brother. Now, Milton, business is closed between us, but you will find that you have only bound yourself over to receive your supplies at such price as may be inflicted, and that all you will ever make in the country will go to pay for your goods; you will be kept as you have been, a mere slave, to catch beaver for others. I sincerely wish you well, and believe had you been

here these things would not have been done. I hope that your leg is better and that you will yet be able to go whole footed in all respects. (Signed) N. J. WYETH."

As Wyeth indicates in his letter to the business firm, the Rocky Mountain Fur Company had disintegrated and virtually perished. They had, as he said, lacked business acumen, though all were expert trappers, traders and mountaineers. The season had been a very poor one for everybody, and especially for the Rocky Mountain Company. Thus, on the 20th of June, 1834, papers were signed in which Fraeb and Gervais sold out entirely and a new company, composed of Fitzpatrick, Sublette and Bridger was formed. This document, on one sheet is reproduced photographically in Chittenden's *American Fur Trade*.

"Whereas, a dissolution of partnership having taken place by mutual consent between Thomas Fitzpatrick, Milton G. Sublette, Henry Fraeb, John Baptiste Jervais and James Bridger, members of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, all persons having demands against said company are requested to come forward and receive payment; those indebted to said firm are desired to call and make immediate payment, as they are anxious to close the business of the concern.

"Hams Fork, June 20, 1834.

"(Signed) THOS. FITZPATRICK,
M. G. SUBLETTE,
(In different ink as if at a later date)
HENRY FRAEB,
J. B. GERVAIS,
JAMES (his x mark) BRIDGER.

"Witness: Wm. L. Sublette for Bridger and Fitzpatrick.

"Witness: J. P. Risley for Fraeb and Gervais.

"The public are hereby notified that the business will in future be conducted by Thomas Fitzpatrick, Milton G. Sublette and James Bridger, under the style and firm of Fitzpatrick, Sublette and Bridger.

"Hams Fork, June 20, 1834.

"(Signed) THOS. FITZPATRICK,
M. G. SUBLETTE,
(In different ink as above)
JAMES (his x mark) BRIDGER.

"Witness: Wm. L. Sublette."

Fraeb received "forty head of horse beast, forty beaver traps, eight guns, and \$1,000 worth of merchandise." Gervais received "twenty head of horse beast, thirty beaver traps, and \$500 worth of merchandise." Fraeb followed the mountains with an independent company for many years, among his men being Jim Baker. He was killed by Indians in the middle forties. Gervais' name disappears from print.

CHAPTER XXIV

ARROWHEAD REMOVED FROM BRIDGER'S BODY

IN conformity with an understanding between the trappers, the new Fitzpatrick, Sublette and Bridger company moved out of the summer trading rendezvous of 1834 to the east side of the Rocky Mountains, where they were to confine their activities for some time. Fitzpatrick evidently went through the South Pass, as William L. Sublette went out with the furs, and made his fall hunt on the skirts of the Crow country.

James Bridger, Joseph L. Meek, Kit Carson, and a large band of trappers went north, probably directly through the Yellowstone Park area, since they had agreed not to trap the Snake, and were next heard from on the Gallatin River. Here Meek, Carson, and fourteen others went on a visit to Joseph Gale, who, with a party of Wyeth's men, were encamped a short distance away, according to couriers.

Remaining over night, Meek and a companion started out ahead of the rest, to return to Bridger's camp, but were waylaid by a war party of Blackfeet and sent pell mell back into Gale's camp. Gale's men were very poor, having already had distressing times with the Blackfeet, and were thus nearly helpless; but the onrushing attackers were met with a violent charge from Meek's men, and they fell back with considerable loss. They fired the grass and timber while retreating.

Thus the trappers were driven from cover by the flames, behind which the Blackfoot tricksters were fairly secure. Using their dead horses' bodies for barricades, the trappers put on an effective fight, and the Blackfoot fighters gave up and departed toward mid-afternoon. At this moment, Bridger arrived with the main body of trappers, having suspected trouble and traveled in quest of the absentees.

Gale's brigade was now without horses, and so nearly

without men and equipment, that he associated himself and his remaining men with Bridger's command for the rest of the season. After trapping the Three Forks area under the wicked eyes of the Blackfoot people, Bridger thought it best to drift eastward down the Yellowstone River. Spreading his men southward, he is next heard from on Pryor's Fork, where Meek and a few companions are driven out of a ravine by Indians. They had a running fight in which six Blackfoot warriors bit the dust before the fleeing trappers reached the Bridger camp.

Bridger then moved his men farther down the Yellowstone to the Great Bend in the river, where buffalo meat and cottonwood forage were abundant, probably a short journey below the mouth of the Big Horn, and here he spent the winter of 1834-1835. The country generally, however, was rather poor from the trappers' standpoint, having been well worked over by competing companies and independents, as well as several Indian tribes. By spring the trappers were migrating eastward with the buffalo, Meek says, though predatory Blackfoot prowlers were constantly on the lookout for stragglers and scouts from the Bridger camp.

Now it must be mentioned at this time, that among the other women in the trappers' party was The Mountain Lamb, or Isabel, as Milton G. Sublette had rechristened his Shoshone bride. Sublette was in St. Louis having surgical aid for his leg, and Mrs. Victor, to whom Meek dictated his biography, devotes a chapter to the matter of Meek's taking Sublette's wife for his own. Contrary to the signification of her new name, she was far from meek, but had a mind of her own, and the ability to back up her decisions with strength and skill.

Bridger had the more serious matter of the trapping business on his hands. He evidently met up with Fitzpatrick early in the spring of 1835, and the two had a meeting with Fontenelle, of the American Fur Company. The American Company, with posts on the Missouri and tributaries, had a constant storm of troubles with Indians, with deserting trappers, and especially with late arrivals of their merchandise for trading in summer. Some sort

of arrangement was therefore made between these old time comrades whereby they were to work closer together.

Fitzpatrick and Bridger then moved southward across the present state of Wyoming to the new post erected the previous autumn by William L. Sublette and Robert Campbell, known as Fort Laramie. Here they found the fort completed and occupied, a number of men being out among the Cheyenne and Sioux Indians beating up trade with the post. Evidently then, or a few weeks later, Fitzpatrick and Bridger met up with Captain Sublette and effected the purchase of Fort Laramie, forming for them the first permanent domicile, even for a winter, since that at the Salt Lake rendezvous, and a post much nearer to St. Louis.

The general mountain rendezvous, however, was scheduled for the Green River valley in the summer of 1835, and thither all interests proceeded as the spring was growing late. The gathering seems to have been held near Captain Bonneville's old fort, where about two hundred white men and two thousand Indians made gala day as of old. Merchandise may not have been any more plentiful, but furs were fewer, and thus the business turnover was probably not as great as formerly.

The Rev. Samuel Parker (23) gives us glimpses of this rendezvous, and of James Bridger, which are welcome. Doctor Parker reached the Green River August 12, 1835. His companion, Dr. Marcus Whitman, a physician and surgeon, found some professional work awaiting him, including the removal of the arrowhead from Bridger's body, which he had carried since the day the Blackfoot chief felled him with his own gun. Doctor Parker writes:

"While we continued in this place Doctor Whitman was called to perform some very important surgical operations. He extracted an iron arrow, three inches long, from the back of Captain Bridger, which was received in a skirmish three years before with the Black-foot Indians. It was a difficult operation because the arrow was hooked at the point by striking a large bone and a cartilaginous substance had grown around it. The Doctor pursued the operation with great self-possession and perseverance; and his patient manifested equal firmness. The Indians looked on meanwhile, with countenances indicating wonder, and in their own peculiar manner

expressed great astonishment when it was extracted. The Doctor also extracted another arrow from the shoulder of one of the hunters, which had been there two years and a half. His reputation becoming favorably established, calls for medical and surgical aid were almost incessant."

In conference with the Indians, Doctor Parker secured the services of a convoy as far as Fort Walla Walla, from the chiefs of the Flathead and Nez perce Indians at the rendezvous. The chiefs of the Utahs and Shoshonies were also there with their tribes, but were not visited formally by the Doctor. He gives some sidelights on the life at the rendezvous, and relates the famous story of Kit Carson's duel with a braggart, which occurred for the Doctor's delectation on that occasion.

"A hunter, who goes technically by the name of the 'great bully of the mountains,' mounted his horse and with a loaded rifle challenged any Frenchman, American, Spaniard or Dutchman to fight him in single combat. Kit Carson, an American, told him if he wished to die, he would accept the challenge. Shunar defied him. Carson mounted his horse, and with a loaded pistol, rushed into close contact, and both almost at the same instant fired. Carson's ball entered Shunar's hand, came out at the wrist and passed through the arm above the elbow. Shunar's ball passed over the head of Carson; and while he went for another pistol, Shunar begged that his life might be spared.

"August 21, 1835," continues Doctor Parker, "commenced our journey in company with Captain Bridger, who goes with about fifty men six or eight days' journey on our route. Instead of going down on the southwest side of Lewis' (Snake) River, we conclude to take our course northerly for the Trois Tetons, which are three very high mountains covered with perpetual snow, separated from the main chain of the Rocky Mountains, and are seen at a very great distance; and from thence to Salmon River. Went only about three miles from the place of rendezvous and encamped."

Reaching Jackson's Little Hole, south of Jackson Hole: "We continued in this encampment three days to give our animals an opportunity to recoup and for Captain Bridger to fit and send out several of his men into the mountains to hunt and trap. When I reflected upon the probability that most of these men would never return to their friends, but would find their graves in the mountains, my heart was pained for them, and especially at their thoughtlessness about the great things of the eternal world. I gave each of them a few tracts, for which they appeared grateful, and said they would be company for them in their lonely hours; and as they rode away I could only pray for their safety and salvation."

Passing to the south of the Teton Mountains: "I was shown the place where the men of the fur companies, at the time of their rendezvous two years before, had a battle with the Blackfeet

Indians." It was evident that James Bridger was acting as guide; and through the guide's narrative Doctor Parker gained the impression that it could not have been "much to the honor of civilized Americans." . . .

"In this place I parted with Captain Bridger and his party, who went northeast into the mountains to their hunting ground, which the Blackfeet claim and for which they will contend. The first chief of the Flatheads and his family, with a few of his people, went with Captain Bridger that they might continue within the range of buffalo through the coming winter."

Bridger's first wife was the daughter of a Flathead chief (1) and the suggestion is here ventured that this was the particular chief and the approximate time of the marriage, though the date of this marriage is not known, and there is no mention of any persons but the chief's "family" above. However, at the time of the Whitman Massacre, 1847, Mary Ann Bridger was eleven years of age (25).

Joseph L. Meek was with the Parker convoy under James Bridger, going with Bridger back to the Yellowstone country. Probably this party explored the Yellowstone Park area again more fully, since the trapping season was a month or two off, and the park lay before them on leaving Doctor Parker on the 29th of August, 1835.

The trapping season found them on Rocky Fork of the Yellowstone River, where Meek was taken captive by a war party of Crows while setting his traps. Their chief, named The Bold, told Meek the white men were liars, ordinarily, and ought to die, but if Meek would tell the truth he should live. The Bold asked who Meek's captain was and how many men he had.

"I said, 'Bridger is my captain's name; or, in the Crow tongue, Casapy, the Blanket Chief,' said Meek, adding that he had forty men, risking his life by thus lying, for there were two hundred and forty men in the party, including Indians.

" 'We will make them poor,' said he; 'and you shall live but they shall die.'

"I thought to myself, 'hardly'; but said nothing. He then asked me where I was to meet the camp, and I told him; and then how many days before the camp would be there; which I answered truly, for I wanted them to find the camp.

"It was now late in the afternoon and there was a great bustle getting ready for the march to meet Bridger. Two big Indians mounted my mule, but the women made me pack moccasins. The spies started first and after a while the main party. Seventy warriors traveled ahead of me; I was placed with the women and boys; and after us the balance of the braves. As we traveled along the women would prod me with sticks, and laugh and say, 'Masta Sheela' (which means white man), 'Masta Sheela, very poor now.' The fair sex were very much amused. . . .

"On the afternoon of the fourth day the spies who were in advance, looking out from a high hill, made a sign to the main party. In a moment all sat down. Directly they got another sign, and then they got up and moved on. I was as well up in Indian signs as they were; and I knew they had discovered white men. What was worse, I knew they would soon discover that I had been lying to them. All I had to do then was to trust to luck. Soon we came to the top of the hill, which overlooked the Yellowstone, from which I could see the plains below extending as far as the eye could reach, and about three miles off, the camp of my friends. My heart beat double quick about that time; and I once in a while put my hand to my head to feel if my scalp was there.

"While I was watching our camp, I discovered that the horse-guard had seen us, for I knew the sign he would make if he discovered Indians. I thought the camp a splendid sight that evening. It made a powerful show to me, who did not expect ever to see it after that day. And it *was* a fine sight by now from the hill where I stood. About two hundred and fifty men and women, and children in great numbers, and about a thousand horses and mules. Then the beautiful plain and the sinking sun; and the herds of buffalo that could not be numbered; and the cedar hills covered with elk; I never saw so fine a sight as all that looked to me then.

"When I turned my eyes on that savage Crow band, and saw the chief standing with his hand on his mouth, lost in amazement, and beheld the warriors' tomahawks and spears in the glittering sun, my heart was very little. Directly the chief turned to me with a horrible scowl. Said he: 'I promised that you should live if you told the truth; but you have told me a great lie.'

"Then the warriors gathered around with their tomahawks in their hands; but I was showing off very brave, and kept my eyes fixed on the horse-guard who was approaching the hill to drive in the horses. This drew the attention of the chief and the warriors too. Seeing that the guard was within two hundred yards of us the chief turned to me and ordered me to tell him to come up. I pretended to do what he said; but instead of that I howled out to him to stay off or he would be killed; and to tell Bridger to try to treat with them and get me away.

"As quick as he could he ran to the camp and in a few minutes Bridger appeared on his large white horse. He came up to within three hundred yards of us, and called out to me, asking who the Indians were. I answered, 'Crows.' He then told me to say to the chief he wished him to send one of his sub-chiefs to smoke with him.

"All this time my heart beat terribly hard. I don't know now why they didn't kill me at once; but the head chief seemed overcome with surprise. When I repeated to him what Bridger said he reflected a moment and then ordered the second chief, called Little-Gun, to go and smoke with Bridger. But they kept on preparing for war; getting on their paint and feathers, arranging their scalp locks, selecting their arrows, and getting their ammunition ready.

"While this was going on, Little-Gun had approached to within about a hundred yards of Bridger, when, according to the Crow laws of war, each was forced to strip himself and proceed the remaining distance in a state of nudity, and kiss and embrace. While this interesting ceremony was being performed, five of Bridger's men had followed him, keeping in a ravine until they got within shooting distance, when they showed themselves, and cut off the return of Little-Gun, thus making a prisoner of him.

"If you think my heart did not jump up when I saw that, you think wrong. I knew it was kill or cure now. Every Indian snatched a weapon, and fierce threats were howled against me. But all at once about a hundred of our trappers appeared on the scene. At the same time Bridger called to me, to tell me to propose to the chief to exchange me for Little-Gun. I explained to The Bold what Bridger wanted to do, and he sullenly consented, for, he said, he could not afford to give a chief for one white dog's scalp. I was then allowed to go towards my camp and Little-Gun towards his; and the rescue I hardly hoped for was accomplished."

CHAPTER XXV

EMPLOYED BY FORMER ENEMIES

JAMES BRIDGER and his trappers went into winter quarters during December, 1835, at the big bend of the Yellowstone, where he rested the previous winter. While his party was large, numbering nearly five hundred persons all told, and the stock herds were especially large, the game meat and forage were more plentiful than in the previous year.

Joseph L. Meek records a vengeful trick on the Blackfeet, perpetrated by some Delaware Indians, which reflected on Bridger's camp. They borrowed a couple of the trappers' horses and staked them in an exposed place as decoys; some Blackfoot scouts crept up to steal them and were shot for their pains.

This so enraged the Blackfoot hornets that they spent several weeks in preparations and then swarmed onto Bridger's encampment eleven hundred strong, with their stingers out. Bridger built a defense fort, corraled the stock, and placed his command under effective fighting plans very swiftly. Countering, the Indians built small log forts, holding about ten men each, and sniped for two days, killing two men. Then they gave up the job and departed.

Bridger's pass or certificate of freedom from The Bold of the Crow nation was still good, having been good for three months' peace, presumably, hence Bridger betook his command up the Yellowstone on the spring hunt. But Crows came crowding into the trapping encampments, bartering skins and animals, and exulting over their superiority whenever it seemed safe.

One Crow incidentally struck The Mountain Lamb with a whip; and the Lamb being now the exclusive property of Joseph L. Meek, the owner and husband promptly shot the Crow dead in his tracks. This precipitated a near-war, during which excitement two or three

Crows squawked out and one trapper was killed. Explanations were in order, and Bridger took Meek to task.

"Well, you raised a hell of a row in camp," said the commander, "rolling out his deep bass voice in the slow monotonous tones which mountain men very quickly acquire," Meek told Mrs. Victor.

"Very sorry, Bridger, but couldn't help it. No devil of an Indian shall strike Meek's wife."

"But you got a man killed."

"Sorry for the man; couldn't help it though, Bridger."

Bridger's free and peaceful pass through the Crow country had thus suddenly expired, and he turned into the Big Horn basin for his spring trapping beginnings. Passing gradually over into Wind River valley, Bridger led his moving village through the South Pass and to the valley of the Green again for the summer rendezvous of 1836.

Bridger was at once approached by the Nez Perce Indians, complaining that the Bannocks had stolen horses from them; he promised his aid, and shortly the Nez Percés succeeded in re-capturing their horses, presenting them in turn to the whites, Bridger receiving, innocently enough, a very fine animal. Observing their stolen horses in the possession of the whites, the Bannocks dashed into the trappers' camp early one morning yelling and gesturing to stampede the stock and frighten the populace.

"Bridger stood in front of his lodge, holding his horse by a lasso, and the head chief rode over it, jerking it out of his hand. At this unprecedented insult to his master, a negro named Jim, cook to the Booshways (captain), seized a rifle and shot the chief dead," says Meek. "At the same time, an arrow shot at random struck Umentucken (The Mountain Lamb) in the breast, and the joys and sorrows of The Mountain Lamb were no more.

"The killing of a head chief always throws an Indian war party into confusion, and negro Jim was greatly elated at this signal feat of his. The trappers, who were as much surprised at the suddenness of the assault as it is in the mountain-man's nature to be, quickly recovered themselves. In a few moments the men were mounted and in motion, and the disordered Bannocks were obliged to fly toward their village, Bridger's company pursuing them.

"All the rest of that day the trappers fought the Bannocks,

driving them out of their village and plundering it, and forcing them to take refuge on an island in the river. Even there they were not safe, the guns of the mountain-men picking them off from their stations on the river banks. Umentucken was well avenged that day.

"All night the Indians remained on the island, where sounds of wailing were heard continually; and when morning came one of their old women appeared bearing the pipe of peace. 'You have killed all our warriors,' she said; 'do you now want to kill the women? If you wish to smoke with women, I have the pipe.'

"Not caring either to fight or to smoke with so feeble a representative of the Bannocks, the trappers withdrew. But it was the last war party that nation ever sent against the mountain-men; though in later times they have by their atrocities avenged the losses of that day."¹⁸

Again, and for the last time, Capt. William L. Sublette of the mercantile establishment in St. Louis of Sublette & Campbell, was on hand at the rendezvous with merchandise for the mountain men, ready to carry their furs back to the market. The brother, Milton G. Sublette, had also come out to the mountains, though still suffering with his leg which had already been amputated twice.

Fitzpatrick was also on the way from St. Louis with merchandise, but was greatly delayed. A large scouting party journeyed as far as Independence Rock, and learned the interesting news: that Fitzpatrick had started with nineteen laden carts, each drawn with two mules hitched tandem, and one light wagon, all of which had been left at Fort Laramie. And that Captain Stuart, Fitzpatrick's adventurer companion, was along with two wagons hauled by mules, one of which wagons had been deposited at Fort Laramie on the way.

But the greatest surprise was the presence of two white women, wives of Dr. Marcus Whitman and Dr. Henry J. Spalding, missionaries, the quartet being bound for Oregon to join Doctor Parker, whom Whitman had left at Green River the previous summer. This contingent was traveling with Fitzpatrick, but in their own vehicles, one being a light two-horse wagon, and one a four-horse

18. Mrs. Victor's interest must at times have goaded Meek to heights of eloquence above the level of the facts.

freight wagon. These ladies were of especially great interest to the Indians at the rendezvous, whose belief in a Supreme Being was deepened to note that He could make some women white, and that they could domesticate the wild beasts, since they had some milk cows with them.

After seeing the distinguished travelers on their way, the leaders of the mountain men sat in a conference in which the interests east of the Rocky Mountains were amalgamated into the American Fur Company, in competition with the interests west of the divide. Thomas Fitzpatrick dropped out of the firm, though he remained in the mountains for some years.

Captain Sublette returned to the frontier to remain, and his unfortunate brother repined at Fort Laramie for some months and finally passed away on December 19, 1836. This left Lucien Fontenelle and James Bridger in general command of the mountain forces, and Andrew Drips became the traveling partner, to handle the merchandise and furs.

Fontenelle, with a hundred men, departed from the rendezvous for the Yellowstone River drainage, where he knew the country best; while James Bridger, with nearly twice as many men, journeyed northwestward by way of Salt River and the Snake for a brief sojourn in Pierre's Hole. Toward the close of October, 1836, Bridger's company moved into the Yellowstone River headwaters by way of Hell Gate Pass.

"The company had not proceeded far into the Blackfoot country, between Hell Gate Pass and the Yellowstone, before they were attacked by the Blackfeet," declares Meek. "On arriving at the Yellowstone they discovered a considerable encampment of the enemy on an island or bar in the river, and proceeded to open hostilities before the Indians should have discovered them. Making little forts of sticks or bushes, each man advanced cautiously to the bank overlooking the island, pushing his leafy fort before him as he crept silently nearer, until a position was reached whence firing could commence with effect.

"The first intimation the luckless savages had of the

neighborhood of the whites was a volley of shots discharged into their camp, killing several of their number. But as this was their own mode of attack, no reflections were likely to be wasted upon the unfairness of the assault; quickly springing to their arms the firing was returned, and for several hours was kept up on both sides. At night the Indians stole off, having lost nearly thirty killed and a few others wounded."

Moving over onto the Musselshell, Bridger's command trapped a while, and then in November returned to the junction of the Big Horn, planning to settle for the winter; but the country had been worked over so thoroughly the game had departed, and the need for game meat sent them over the divide across the Rosebud to the Powder River country. They lost several horses, and were much delayed while crossing over the divide, on account of deep snow, but they reached the lower areas of the Powder and established their winter encampment about Christmas, 1836, in the vicinity of a fort of Captain Bonneville's men in command of Antoine Montero.

Meek avers that the nearly three hundred men in Bridger's command, which had been augmented by many Indians, harassed the Bonneville camp mercilessly, as enemy-competitors. "By the return of spring, Montero had very little remaining of the property belonging to the fort, nor anything to show for it. This mischievous war upon Bonneville was prompted partly by the usual desire to cripple a rival trader, which the leaders encouraged in their men; but in some individual instances far more by the desire for revenge upon Bonneville personally, on account of his censures passed upon members of the Monterey expedition, and on the ways of mountain men generally."

Fontenelle and his band had evidently settled with or near the Bridger company, Captain Stuart, the adventurer, being with him. But in January, 1837, Fontenelle, with four trappers, and Captain Stuart and his party, journeyed over to Fort Laramie, Captain Stuart continuing on to St. Louis to obtain supplies. Fontenelle had evidently gone to the post for a less worthy purpose, the

laconic record being that he committed suicide while intoxicated.

Liquor was plentiful at the winter encampment on the Powder River, however, according to Meek, who opines "perhaps there never was a winter camp in the mountains more thoroughly demoralized than that of Bridger during the months of January and February. Added to the whites, who were reckless enough, were a considerable party of Delaware and Shawnee Indians, excellent allies, and skillful hunters and trappers, but having the Indians' love for strong drink." This drunkenness seems to have been confined principally to the Indians, who became impoverished by the trader who sold the liquor in the neighborhood of the trappers' encampment, without effective opposition from the trapper captain.

But if Bridger's associates and opponents at the head of the trapping and trading interests could not keep themselves free from liquor, Bridger could hardly have been expected to keep an encampment free from the nuisance. It is worth notice that he had now become the leader in the mountains for the American Fur Company, in the business of trapping. There were, however, traders at a number of posts of the company whose business was confined to gathering furs and supplies by trading, resorting, it must be admitted, to just such orgies as Meek describes, to secure some of the business.

About the first of March, 1837, Bridger assembled his forces and was off for the Blackfoot country again. Crossing the Rosebud and the Big Horn, Bridger came upon a Blackfoot village on the Yellowstone, which Meek says was attacked. A prominent Delaware brave was killed, but otherwise little damage resulted, Bridger fighting his way past the hornet's nest and moving on up the river.

As the warmth of the springtime carried the snow from the passageways, Bridger urged his men into the headwaters of the Yellowstone River working the Gallatin, Madison and other streams. From Henry's Lake, Meek says they found themselves following the gruesome trail

of Indians fleeing to the mountain tops to escape the scourge of smallpox, which was dragging down its victims along the way. Soon the trappers came upon a defile, through which they must pass, but which was occupied by about one hundred and fifty Blackfoot warriors, just in the rear of a large Indian encampment.

An advance scouting party crept onto the ledges alongside and opened fire, but they themselves were soon dislodged and routed back to the main Bridger camp by fire from their rear. The fight was renewed the next day, a small party of trappers engaging the Indians while the trapper village passed beyond on the upper side of the defile. But it was necessary to accept a most bitter contest as this smaller trapper party sought to rejoin their companions ahead, subsequently.

"Mansfield also got into such close quarters, surrounded by the enemy," says Meek in describing the affray, "that he gave himself up for lost, and called out to his comrades: 'Tell Old Gabe (Bridger), that Old Cotton (his own sobriquet) is gone.' He lived, however, to deliver his own farewell message, for at this critical juncture the trappers were reinforced and relieved. Still the fight went on, the trappers gradually working their way to the upper end of the inclosed part of the valley, past the point of danger."

Meek says the Blackfoot warriors raised some assistance and pursued the trappers, but "the Blackfeet found the camp of Bridger too strong for them. They were severely beaten and compelled to retire to their village, leaving Bridger free to move on.

"The following day the camp reached the village of Little-Robe, a chief of the Piegans, who held a talk with Bridger, complaining that his nation were all perishing from the smallpox which had been given to them by the whites. Bridger was able to explain to Little-Robe his error. . . . This matter being explained, Little-Robe consented to trade horses and skins."

As the summer advanced, Bridger led his men back into the Yellowstone Park area again, where, with the delay of spring, at that high altitude, the furs remained

prime, and where Bridger evidently enjoyed taking his men. Entering from the northwest, it is apparent that they visited the geyser basins again, stopping to trap, according to Meek, at "Lewis Lake on Lewis Fork of the Snake River." They then crossed the continental divide into Wind River basin, the shortest and most probable route being by way of Two Ocean Pass, a region of much interest to Bridger, as shown by his frequent descriptions of the place.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE PASSING OF THE RENDEZVOUS

THE summer trading rendezvous was announced for the Wind River valley in 1837, and the usual throng of trappers and hordes of Indians were present, and in addition thereto, Dr. W. H. Gray, of the Flathead mission, who had been with Doctors Whitman and Spalding in 1836, and Captain Stuart, just in the mountains again from St. Louis. Captain Stuart had been robbed poor by the Crows prior to his St. Louis visit, and was assisted by a sub-trader, Newell, to recover some of his property.

The Crows complained of the treatment accorded them by the whites. "It is true," said Newell to them, "that you have sustained heavy losses. But that is not the fault of the Blanket Chief (Bridger)." Meek tells the story. "If your young men have been killed, they have been killed while attempting to rob or to kill our captain's men. If you have lost horses, your young men have stolen five to our one. If you are poor in skins and other property, it is because you sold it all for drink which did you no good. Neither is Bridger to blame that you have had the smallpox."

The trading posts had gathered their quota of furs, and the traveling traders and trappers had gleaned the furs from the Indian tribes; thus the rendezvous of 1837 was a rather lean and illy patronized affair. Moreover, it was plainly apparent that the trappers were not getting the furs per man they used to get; the beaver were being killed off to a comparative scarcity in many areas.

The fabric of available narrative spreads out quite thin about this time, though Meek says the American Fur Company, presumably Bridger and his men, trapped as formerly over the streams east of the mountains, and when winter came went into quarters with the Crows on the lower plains of the Powder River. On the spring hunt of 1838, "Bridger again led his brigade all through the

Yellowstone country, to the streams on the north side of the Missouri, to the headwaters of that river; and finally rendezvoused on the north fork of the Yellowstone, near Yellowstone Lake."

At last, evidently Bridger drew his friends into an assemblage in the Yellowstone Park area, which was so great a topic of conversation with him in years to come. It happens, however, that it was not a particularly successful meeting, as furs were still fewer than in the previous lean year. The American Company, led by Bridger, went southeastward again on the backbone of the continent, dropping into the Wind River valley, where the furs were prepared for transporting to St. Louis.

The following power of attorney, and order for two years' wages, were made by Bridger at Wind River on this occasion: (97)

Wind River Rendezvous, July 13, 1838.

Wm. L. Sublette, Esq.,

Dr. Sir: Attached herewith you will find a power of attorney from myself to you, giving authority to collect from Pratte Chouteau & Co. the full amount due from them to me for services rendered and hope you will use every exertion to obtain it for me, and deposit it in some safe keeping, subject to my future disposal, in the meantime using it for your benefit if you think proper. Accompanying this power is an acknowledgement from Mr. Drips of the amt. due me by the company. I am unable to obtain from him a draft or order in legal form, but hope you may be able to collect the money.

My best respects to my old friend, R. Campbell, and accept for yourself the warmest esteem of

Your friend & obdt. servt.

his
JAMES X BRIDGER.
mark

Wind River 13 July 1838.

Know all men by these presents, that I James Bridger, late of Illinois, and now in the Rocky Mountains, have constituted and appointed and do hereby constitute and appoint William L. Sublette of St. Louis, Missouri, my true and lawful attorney with full power in my name to do and perform all my business transactions as fully and as perfectly as though I were personally present hereby confirming the same. And I do by these presents fully authorize said William L. Sublette to receive all moneys due me and in my name to give receipts therefor to institute suits at Law for the securing the paying of all debts due me.

And especially, whereas Pratte Chouteau & Co. of St. Louis, Missouri, are due me a sum of money of which the accompanying instrument of writing is their acknowledgement and which reads as follows viz:

Messrs. Pratte Chouteau & Co.

Gentl.

There will be due James Bridger on his arrival at St. Louis three

thousand and three hundred and seventeen dollars and thirteen cents for services rendered the R. M. outfit for the two last years services.

ANDREW DRIES,

Agt. for Pratte Chouteau & Co., Rocky Mountains.
Wind River J. 12, 1838.

Now I do by these presents authorise said William L. Sublette to receive the said sum of money of said Pratte Chouteau & Co. and to take all legal measures for enforcing the payment thereof as fully and as perfectly as though I were personally present and transacting the same, hereby confirming to all intents and purposes the acts all and severally of my aforesaid attorney.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this thirteenth day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty eight.

JAMES (his x mark) BRIDGER.

Witness:

Wm. Preston Clark,
John Radford.

Meek had found a successor for Umentucken, The Mountain Lamb, in the person of a Nez Perce woman, who at this time was encumbered by a baby daughter, Helen Mar (Meek). But at the Wind River encampment the woman departed with another, and Meek pursued her through the South Pass, and for some weeks aftereafter; he overtook them on Green River, and accompanied the party to Fort Hall, but the little lady was homesick for her people, at Fort Walla Walla, and hither she went.

Meek and a party of trappers went north into Godin's Fork and the Salmon River country, trapping early that winter; from there his route led into the Beaverhead country, or Jefferson Fork of the Missouri, stopping briefly at a Flathead and a Nez Perce village in this valley. Both of the villages accompanied him onto the Madison Fork, and thence to Missouri Lake, where they went on a buffalo hunt for winter meat.

A thousand or more armed Indians swarmed onto a great herd of buffalo at the lake, the Indians approaching in a half circle to inclose the beasts. Two or three thousand buffalo were killed in a few minutes. James Bridger, with his camp, had passed into the Big Horn and thence to the Yellowstone, and was at the moment passing Missouri Lake. He made a purchase of fifteen hundred buffalo tongues, a choice morsel.

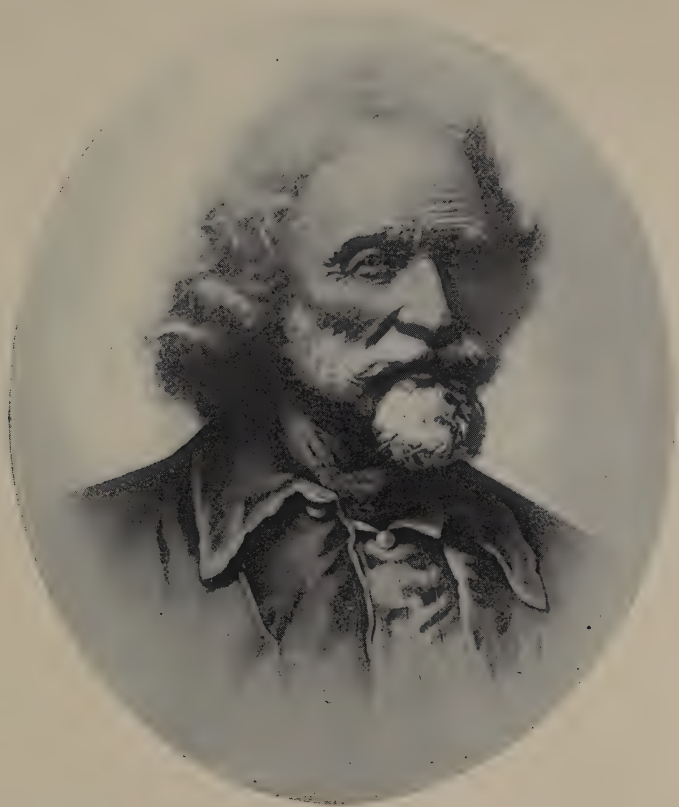
From Missouri Lake, Bridger and his dwindling band passed into Gallatin Fork, and thence through Burnt Hole basin. His route was then over the divide and to

Pierre's Hole, and thence to Green River, where for the first time, the roving trappers established their winter headquarters (1838-1839). There may have been a dispersal of some of the men to the surrounding forts, though Meek says they mostly wintered on Green River. Experience must have dictated that the lowest land available would offer the mildest winter climate, thus they probably settled on Henry's Fork, at the Utah state line, a place well known to them since the first Ashley rendezvous at that place.

James Bridger himself evidently journeyed to St. Louis with Drips for a look at the old town, for we find that "Jim" Baker was induced to go to the mountains at that time by Bridger. Baker was then twenty years of age, and he was born December 19, 1818, thus the date becomes May 25th, 1839, when these two famous Jims and ninety-one others embarked at St. Louis on a steamer to the mouth of the Kaw. They were transported on keel boats another ninety miles, where the outfit was transferred to carts, and the plains journey begun.

Baker says the journey was uneventful until they reached the Laramie Plains, whence they had traveled by way of the South Fork of the Platte. Indians were "as thick as bees," Baker declares, and the party was stopped many times and subjected to examination by Indians who did not want the trappers to cross their territory. Two or three councils were held to decide the fate of the trappers, "But thanks be to James Bridger," said Baker, "for our safety, because I learned then and later of his great knowledge of, and ability to treat with, the redskins, which was never excelled by any scout of the plains."

Following down the Medicine Bow and Laramie rivers, the party turned up the Sweetwater, and crossed South Pass, and thence on the well broken road over the Sandys, and New Fork to Captain Bonneville's fort at Horse Creek, where the summer trading rendezvous of 1839 was to be held. Major Andrew Drips, and sub-trader Joseph Walker, in charge of the merchandise train which Bridger and Baker accompanied, were overtaken at New



JAMES BAKER, fur trapper, frontiersman, and pioneer settler in Wyoming. Confederate for a time with Bridger.

Fork on July 4 by Dr. F. A. Wislizenus, a German physician on a junket. Doctor Wislizenus' description of this last of the famed rendezvous (24) is the only one extant, and deserves a wider acquaintance.

"These agents were accompanied by their Indian wives and a lot of dogs," Doctor Wislizenus says. "The two squaws, quite passable as to their features, appeared in highest state. Their red blankets, with the silk kerchiefs on their heads, and their gaudy embroideries, gave them quite an oriental appearance. Like themselves, their horses were betied with embroideries, beads, corals, ribbons and little bells. The bells were hung about in such number that when riding in their neighborhood one might think one's self in the midst of Turkish music.

"The squaws, however, behaved most properly. They took care of the horses, pitched a tent, and were alert for every word of their wedded lords. From the agents we learned that this year's meeting place had been fixed on the right bank of the Green River, at the angle formed by its junction with Horse Creek. We were now about a day's journey from the place. Starting off in company in the afternoon, we covered at a more rapid pace than usual, about twelve miles, and then camped on a branch of the New Fork, whose shores were framed with fine pines.

"It was the Fourth of July, the great holiday of the United States. Our camp, however, presented its humdrum daily appearance. We stretched out around the fires, smoked, and in expectation of what the morrow would bring, went quietly asleep. The next morning we started early and reached, toward noon, the Green River so long desired. The Green River (Colorado of the West) rises in the northwestern slope of the Wind River Mountains, flows in southwestern direction, and empties in the Gulf of California. Where we first saw it, it is a clear, rippling streamlet, abounding in trout; neither very broad nor very deep; but later on it becomes a broad, rushing stream. Its navigation is said to present enormous difficulties.

"We crossed the river and were then in the acute angle formed by it and the Horse Creek (a brook coming from the northwest and emptying here into the Green River). The space between is level; the ground is loamy sand. The camping place was about two miles above the Horse Creek, along the right bank of the Green River. The plain between the two streams is here about three miles broad. The rendezvous has repeatedly been held here. . . .

"We reached the camping place. What first struck our eye was several long rows of Indian tents (lodges), extending along the Green River for at least a mile. The Indians and whites are mingled here in various groups. Of the Indians there had come

chiefly Snakes, Flatheads and Nez Perces, peaceful tribes, living beyond the Rocky Mountains. Of whites, the agents of the different trading companies and a quantity of trappers had found their way here, visiting this fair of the wilderness to buy and to sell, to renew old contracts and to make new ones, to make arrangements for future meetings, to meet old friends, to tell of adventures they had been through, and to spend for once a jolly day.

" . . . One of our fellow travelers, who had gone to the mountains for the first time nine years ago with about one hundred men, estimated that by this time half the number had fallen victims to the tomahawks of the Indians. But this daily danger seems to exercise a magic attraction over most of them. Only with reluctance does a trapper abandon his dangerous craft; and a sort of serious homesickness seizes him when he retires from his mountain life to civilization.

"In manners and customs the trappers have borrowed much from the Indians. Many of them, too, have taken Indian women as wives. Their dress is generally of leather. The hair of the head is usually allowed to grow long. In place of money, they use beaver skins, for which they can satisfy all their needs at the fairs by way of trade. A pound of beaver skins is usually paid for with \$4 worth of goods; but the goods themselves are sold at enormous prices, so-called mountain prices. A pint of meal, for instance, costs from 50 cents to a \$1; a pint of coffee-beans, cocoa-beans or sugar, \$2 each; a pint of diluted alcohol (the only spirits to be had), \$4; a piece of chewing tobacco of the commonest sort, which is usually smoked Indian fashion mixed with herbs, \$1 to \$2. Guns and ammunition, bear traps, blankets, kerchiefs, and gaudy finery for the squaws, are sold at enormous profit. At the yearly rendezvous the trappers seek to indemnify themselves for the sufferings and privations of a year spent in the wilderness. With their hairy bank notes, the beaver skins, they can obtain all the luxuries of the mountains, and live for a few days like lords.

"Coffee and chocolate is cooked; the pipe is kept aglow day and night; the spirits circulate; and whatever is not spent in such ways the squaws coax out of them, or else it is squandered at cards. Formerly single trappers on such occasions have often wasted \$1,000. But the days of their glory seem to be past, for constant hunting has very much reduced the number of beavers. This diminution in the beaver catch made itself noticeable at this year's rendezvous in the quieter behavior of the trappers. There was little drinking of spirits, and almost no gambling. Another decade perhaps and the original trapper will have disappeared from the mountains.

"The Indians who had come to the meeting were no less interesting than the trappers. There must have been some thousands of them. Their tents are made of buffalo hides, tanned on both

sides and sewed together, stretched in cone shape over a dozen poles that are leaned against each other, their tops crossing. In front and on top this leather can be thrown back to form door and chimney. The tents are about twelve feet high and twenty feet in circumference at the ground, and give sufficient protection in any kind of weather.

"I visited many tents, partly out of curiosity, partly to barter for trifles, and sought to make myself intelligible in the language of signs as far as possible. An army of Indian dogs, very much resembling the wolf, usually beset the entrance. From some tents comes the sound of music. A virtuoso beats a sort of kettle drum with bell around with all his might, and the chorus accompanies him with strange monotone, untrained sounds that showed strong tendency to the minor chords. A similar heart-rending song drew me to a troop of squaws that were engrossed in their game of 'The Hand,' so popular with the Indians. Some small object, a bit of wood for instance, is passed from hand to hand among the players seated in a circle; and it is some one's part to guess in whose hands the object is. During the game the chorus steadily sings some song as monotonous as those to which bears dance. But the real object is to gamble in this way for some designated prize. It is a game of hazard. In this case, for example, a pile of beads and corals which lay in the midst of the circle, was the object in question. Men and women are so carried away by the game that they often spend a whole day and night at it.

"Other groups of whites and Indians were engaged in barter. The Indians had for the trade chiefly tanned skins, moccasins, thongs of buffalo leather or braided buffalo hair, and fresh or dried buffalo meat. They have no beaver skins. The articles that attracted them most in exchange were powder and lead, knives, tobacco, cinnabar, gaily colored kerchiefs, pocket mirrors and all sorts of ornaments. Before the Indian begins to trade he demands sight of everything that may be offered by the other party to the trade. If there is something there that attracts him, he, too, will produce his wares, but discovers very quickly how much or how little they are coveted. If he himself is not willed to dispose of some particular thing, he obstinately adheres to his refusal, though ten times the value be offered him. The peltry bought from the Indians must be carefully beaten and aired, at peril of having objectionable troops billeted on you. The Indians, accustomed to every kind of uncleanness, seem to have a special predilection for a certain kind of domestic animal, and even to consider it a delicacy. So, for instance, I have repeatedly seen an old grand-dam summering before the tent with her gray-haired spouse, as busy picking the 'heavy cavalry' from his head. But the fingers that deftly caught the prisoner, with equal deftness carried him to the mouth, where the unhappy creature was buried alive!"

CHAPTER XXVII

BRIDGER BUILDS FORT BRIDGER

TRADING forts had sprung up generally over the fur country, to sap the rendezvous of its business, and these, together with the diminishing quantity of furs caught, served to spread discontent among the trappers at large. Thus the roaming, traveling body of trappers that gathered in the trading rendezvous of 1839, disbanded, its members dispersing in all directions, many of them leaving the mountains for good.

Antoine Robidoux had for several years been established at Fort Uinta, at the mouth of the Uinta River in Utah, convenient for gathering the furs and supplying the trappers over the Colorado, Grand and Green waters; while Philip Thompson and William Craig had, about 1837, built a hollow square of log huts called Fort Davy Crockett, in Brown's Hole (extreme northeastern Utah). Fort Hall, Fort Laramie, and the Yellowstone River posts, together with trading posts in eastern Colorado and New Mexico, were also serving the fur men in their districts.

Fort Laramie had gone to pieces somewhat and been rebuilt, being then in charge of three Frenchmen, but still under the ownership of the American Fur Company. Louis Vasquez and William L. Sublette were established on the South Fork of the Platte, ten miles below the mouth of the Cache la Poudre River, together with one or two other similar establishments. The main traveled road up the Platte divided patronage from Fort Laramie and the South Fork posts, while the road was much used by way of Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River.

According to "Jim" Baker, James Bridger spent the autumn of 1839 on Henry's Fork and other nearby waters; but in the absence of specific records, we can only conjecture that Bridger wintered, at least part of the season, at the Vasquez-Sublette fort, in company with Vasquez, Fraeb and Fitzpatrick. Doctor Wislizenus found these

men there on September 3, 1839, on his return from the west.

"Jim" Baker has told his friends also that he trapped over the upper Green River and Wind River waters on his first term in the mountains (1839-1840), presumably in the spring, and probably under James Bridger. Baker returned to St. Louis that autumn, probably with a Drips or a Vasquez fur caravan. Where Bridger spent the autumn of 1840 and the spring of 1841, is not known. Meek visited both the Green and the Wind rendezvous sites in 1840 and laments that he found no one.

But "Jim" Baker had tasted of mountain life, and St. Louis could not interest him any longer, thus in the spring of 1841 he returned to the West, reaching the Green River crossing toward the end of July. Turning southward he found James Bridger encamped on Henry's Fork, and in a state of anxiety for the safety of his friend Fraeb, who was at the head of a large party hunting on Little Snake River.

Word had reached Bridger of the outrages of the Cheyenne and Sioux Indians east of the mountains, and of their determination to annihilate all whites, and Indians not of their tribes, found in that section. Thus Bridger sent Baker and a small party to apprise Fraeb of the situation. They arrived at Fraeb's camp just about the same time a scouting party returned with the startling report that they had been fired upon by Indians.

During a chase the Indians outran them, and left Fraeb unmolested for two weeks. On August 20, 1841, he erected a picketed enclosure or fort for himself, his men and their stock, which seemed to enrage the spying Indians; and beginning on the morning of the 21st, the trappers were besieged for nearly forty-eight hours in succession in a vicious onslaught by the Sioux and Cheyennes. Several Indians were slain, and the attackers finally withdrew, but left the trappers in a poor way, with four men slain, one of them being Fraeb himself. The remainder hastened back to Bridger's encampment on Henry's Fork, reaching there on August 25. Travelers report having seen the ruins of the Fraeb fort the next year, and again

the next. Baker finally went there to live, and to be buried.

At some time during the year 1841, Bridger must have met up with Father P. J. De Smet (41), for in a letter to a friend, written December 30, 1841, De Smet writes: "I expressed a desire to know the medicines used . . .; they, much surprised at my question, replied, laughing, 'We apply nothing to our wounds, they close of themselves.' This recalled to me the reply of Captain Bridger in the past year. He had, within four years, two quivers-full of arrows (French: *deux armures de fleches*:—two arrowheads?) in his body. Being asked if the wounds had been long suppurating, he answered humorously, 'In the mountains meat never spoils.'"

Bridger doubtless felt some concern for his interests east of the mountains, with the Indians on the warpath, and may have crossed the divide that fall to assist in quelling them. His movements that fall, and his location that winter, 1841-1842, are not known. It is evident, however, that he was with Vasquez and probably with Fitzpatrick. He next comes into focus on July 8, 1842, about fifty miles above the forks of the Platte River, in western Nebraska.

Col. John C. Fremont, westbound on his first exploring expedition, had moved up the South Fork of the Platte about thirty-six miles with a small detachment, expecting to rejoin his main party at Fort Laramie, but becoming uneasy about his main body of assistants, sent his topographer, Charles Preuss, northward about fifteen miles to the North Platte to rejoin them. Shortly after meeting them, on July 8, Preuss makes the following entry in his journal: (99)

"Nothing occurred to break the monotony until about five o'clock, when the caravan made a sudden halt. There was a galloping in of scouts and horsemen from every side—a hurrying to and fro in noisy confusion; rifles were taken from their cover; bullet-pouches examined; in short, there was the cry of 'Indians' heard again. I had become so much accustomed to these alarms that now they made but little impression upon me; and before I had time to become excited, the newcomers were ascertained to be whites. It was a large party of traders and trappers, conducted by Mr.

Bridger, a man well known in the history of the country. As the sun was low, and there was a fine grass patch not far ahead, they turned back and encamped for the night with us.

"Mr. Bridger was invited to supper; and after the tablecloth was removed, we listened with eager interest to an account of their adventures. What they had met we would be likely to encounter; the chances which had befallen them would probably happen to us; and we looked upon their life as a picture of our own. He informed us that the condition of the country had become exceedingly dangerous. The Sioux, who had been badly disposed, had broken out into open hostility, and in the preceding autumn his party had encountered them in a severe engagement in which a number of lives had been lost on both sides.

"United with the Cheyenne and Gros Ventre Indians, they were scouring the upper country in war parties of great force, and were at this time in the neighborhood of Red Buttes, a famous landmark, which was directly on our path. They had declared war upon every living thing which should be found westward of that point; though their main object was to attack a large camp of whites and Snake Indians who had had a rendezvous in the Sweetwater valley. Availing himself of his intimate knowledge of the country, he had reached Laramie by an unusual route through the Black Hills, and avoided coming into contact with any of the scattered parties.

"This gentleman offered his services to accompany us so far as the head of the Sweetwater; but the absence of our leader, which was deeply regretted by us all, rendered it impossible for us to enter upon such arrangement. In a camp consisting of men whose lives had been spent in this country I expected to find every one prepared for occurrences of this nature, but to my great surprise I found, on the contrary, that this news had thrown them all into the greatest consternation. . . . All the night scattered groups were assembled around the fires, smoking their pipes, and listening with the greatest eagerness to exaggerated details of Indian hostilities; and in the morning I found the camp dispirited, and agitated by a variety of conflicting opinions. A majority of the people were strongly disposed to return." Preuss was speaking of his own men recently engaged for the journey, not of Bridger's party.

Colonel Fremont then takes up the narrative at Fort Laramie. "For several years the Cheyennes and Sioux had gradually become more and more hostile to the whites, and in the later part of August, 1841, had had a rather severe engagement with a party of sixty men under the command of Mr. Frapp (Fraeb) of St. Louis. The Indians lost eight or ten warriors and the whites had their leader and four men killed. The fight took place on the waters of Snake River; and it was this party, on their return under Mr. Bridger, which had spread so much alarm among my people. In the course

of the spring (1842) two other small parties had been cut off by the Sioux—one on their return from the Crow nation, and the other among the Black Hills.

"The emigrants to Oregon and Mr. Bridger's party met here a few days before our arrival. Division and misunderstandings had grown up among the emigrants; they were already somewhat disheartened by the fatigue of their long and wearisome journey, and the feet of their cattle had become so much worn as to be scarcely able to travel. In this situation they were not likely to find encouragement in the hostile attitude of the Indians, and the new and unexpected difficulties which sprang up before them. They were told that the country was entirely swept of grass, and that few or no buffalo were to be found on their line of route; and with their weakened animals it would be impossible for them to transport their heavy wagons over the mountains.

"Under these circumstances they disposed of their wagons and cattle at the forts, selling them at the prices they had paid in the states and taking in exchange coffee and sugar at \$1 a pound, and miserable, wornout horses which died before they reached the mountains. Mr. Boudeau informed me that he had purchased thirty, and the lower fort eighty, head of fine cattle, some of them of the Durham breed.

"Mr. Fitzpatrick, whose name and high reputation are familiar to all who interest themselves in the history of this country, had reached Laramie in company with Mr. Bridger; and the emigrants were fortunate enough to obtain his services to guide them as far as the British post of Fort Hall, about two hundred and fifty miles beyond the South Pass of the mountains. They had started for this post on July 4th, and immediately after their departure a war party of three hundred and fifty braves set out upon their trail. As their principal chief or partisan had lost some relations in the recent fight, and had sworn to kill the first whites on his path, it was supposed that their intention was to attack the party should a favorable opportunity offer; or, if they were foiled in their principal object by the vigilance of Mr. Fitzpatrick, content themselves with stealing horses and cutting off stragglers. These had gone but a few days previous to our arrival. . . .

"I subsequently learned that the party led by Mr. Fitzpatrick were overtaken by their pursuers near Rock Independence, in the valley of the Sweetwater; but his skill and resolution saved them from surprise, and, small as his force was, they did not venture to attack him openly. Here they lost one of their party by an accident, and, continuing up the valley, they came suddenly upon the large village. From these they met with a doubtful reception. Long residence and familiar acquaintance had given Mr. Fitzpatrick great personal influence among them, and a portion of them were disposed to let him pass quietly; but by far the greater

number were inclined to hostile measures, and the chiefs spent the whole of one night, during which they kept the little party in the midst of them, in council, debating the question of attacking them the next day; but the influence of 'The Broken Hand' as they called Mr. Fitzpatrick (one of his hands having been shattered by the bursting of a gun) at length prevailed and obtained for them an unmolested passage; but they sternly assured him that his path was no longer open, and that any party of whites which should hereafter be found upon it would meet with certain destruction. From all that I have been able to learn I have no doubt that the emigrants owe their lives to Mr. Fitzpatrick.

"Thus it would appear that the country was swarming with scattered war parties; and when I heard, during the day, the various contradictory and exaggerated rumors which were incessantly repeated to them, I was not surprised that so much alarm prevailed among my men. Carson, one of the best and most experienced mountaineers, fully supported the opinion given by Bridger of the dangerous state of the country, and openly expressed his conviction that we could not escape without some sharp encounters with the Indians. In addition to this, he made his will; and among the circumstances which were constantly occurring to increase their alarm, this was the most unfortunate; and I found that a number of my party had become so much intimidated that they had requested to be discharged at this place." (Thomas Fitzpatrick became the guide on Fremont's next expedition, temporarily replacing Kit Carson, it is worth noting in this connection.)

James Bridger was on the way to St. Louis with the fur caravan when Colonel Fremont's party met him. And as he rode along, he was most probably viewing in his mind the motion picture of the changes in the West, changes which Fremont has so well epitomized in the quotations just made, as they must have impressed Bridger. Emigration was rising, and trapping was waning, which both must continue to do. The Indians were on the warpath, and were most likely to be for years to come; if they fought against a few trappers, what would they do against the settlement of their country?

Emigrants must reach destination with the greatest and best possible amount and condition of equipment, yet the emigrants with whom his associate, Fitzpatrick, turned back, had sold their cattle and wagons at Fort Laramie. Even Fremont's Frenchmen selected to guide and guard him across the mountains were defecting

through sheer fear of Indians; and the emigrants were in even a worse predicament, did they but know it. The problems were not new ones to Bridger's mind, for there had been emigrants ahead of these, and he had been casting about for a livelihood for some time.

What more natural, then, that he should decide to establish a fort, which should be, not a trappers' saloon and store, essentially, but a sanctuary in the midst of the emigrant journey, where pasturage and even hay might be plentiful for recruiting the emigrant's stock; where repairs might be made to wagons, and shoes replaced on their stock, and where guiding and guarding parties might be obtained for piloting the emigrants through the hostile country. And further, what more natural than that Bridger himself, who had led parties numbering hundreds of persons of all ages through the most hostile wilderness of the West for several years, and knew the Indians better, perhaps, than any other person, should engage in the work of guiding, or at least supplying guides.

Bridger knew that the emigrant road would cross Green River valley in the neighborhood of Black's Fork, where Uncle Jack Robinson, alias John Robertson (100), an old trapper, had already settled in a hut with his squaw, and who, it is said, had urged Bridger to settle there. Bridger could still retain a connection with the trapping business, since emigrants would be most plentiful in mid-summer, and the trapping was confined to the spring and autumn; and he could carry a stock of merchandise which would attract the trappers and Indians with their furs. Thus Bridger gathered together that winter in St. Louis an entirely new inventory of goods for the spring trip to the mountains in 1843. Louis Vasquez had obviously shared in the opinions and plans, as he did in the ownership and management of the new enterprise.

Bridger's return journey to the mountains must have been made at an early date, because his fort was evidently completed and occupied about the first week in August, 1843. The earliest known mention of the fort by contemporary travelers is by John Boardman (38), a New

York state youth who was journeying west in a small party on horseback. Boardman, who was only seventeen years of age, embarked for Honolulu after reaching the mouth of the Columbia for permanent residence.

He says: "Sunday, August 13. Pleasant. Arrived at Bridger and Vasquez fort, expecting to stay ten or fifteen days to make meat, but what was our disappointment to learn that the Sioux and Cheyennes had been here, run off all the buffalo, killed three Snake Indians, and stolen sixty horses. Monday, August 14. Pleasant. Lying by at the fort. All the companies came up. Many do not know where to go. Tuesday, pleasant. Lying by. Walker is to pilot Chiles to the Point of the Mountains in California. Hughes has gone on. Wednesday, August 15. Lying by. Dement started on. Thursday, August 17. Pleasant. I have been sick for three or four days and eat nothing. Started for Bear River to get meat; road bad."

The next reference to the new Fort Bridger is in the journal of Col. John C. Fremont, made on his second journey into the West. On August 18, 1843, the day after Boardman left, Colonel Fremont writes: "The Shoshonee woman took leave of us here (Hams Fork) expecting to find some of her relations at Bridger's Fort, which is only a mile or two distant, on a fork of this stream."

Bridger himself tells the story of the fort briefly, in a letter written for him (he never learned to write) on December 10, 1843, dated at the fort and addressed to Pierre Choteau, Jr., proprietor of Pierre Choteau, Jr., & Company, the leading mercantile and fur trading house in St. Louis, and one of the financial heads of the great fur business then and for many years before and after that date.

"I have established a small fort, with a blacksmith shop and a supply of iron in the road of the emigrants on Black Fork of Green River, which promises fairly. In coming out here they are generally well supplied with money, but by the time they get here they are in need of all kinds of supplies, horses, provisions, smith-work, etc. They bring ready cash from the states, and should I receive the goods ordered, will have considerable busi-

ness in that way with them, and establish trade with the Indians in the neighborhood, who have a good number of beaver among them. The fort is a beautiful location on Black's Fork of Green River, receiving fine, fresh water from the snow on the Uintah range. The streams are alive with mountain trout. It passes the fort in several channels, each lined with trees, kept alive by the moisture of the soil" (1).

As indicating the importance of this post, General Chittenden (2) says: "In the year 1843 James Bridger, whose name will always be prominent in annals of western adventure, built a post on a tributary of Green River, a water of the Pacific Ocean, for the convenience of emigrants. It was the first trading post beyond the Mississippi ever built for this purpose, and its establishment marks the beginning of the era of emigration into the far West. These two landmarks—the return of Lewis and Clark, and the founding of Fort Bridger—determine the limits of a distinct period in western history."

On another occasion, and in a far different connection, Chittenden again refers to this enterprise (2): "Bridger had made almost a total failure of his latest mountain expedition and had practically announced the death knell of the mountain trade by building a post in the heart of the old fur country for the *convenience of emigrants*. The company was still to survive for a score of years, but it required no prophet to see that the sun of its prosperity, so far as the fur trade was concerned, was on the decline."

CHAPTER XXVIII

ANOTHER FLIER IN FUR

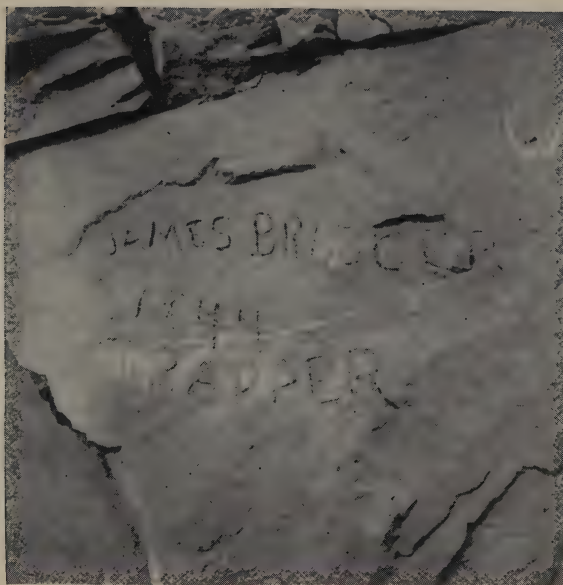
EVIDENTLY Bridger got his emigrant way station established in the nick of time. While one or two parties had been going west each year for the past five or six summers, and only two or three fair sized parties of emigrants passed in 1843, the year the post was erected, the Oregon emigration amounted to nearly fifteen hundred persons in 1844, and three thousand in 1845, while the hosts that came in immediately succeeding years led the red men to declare that the whites in the East must be as numerous as the leaves on the trees.

There is little doubt, therefore, that the summer of 1844 was a busy one at Fort Bridger. Bridger's daughter, Mary Ann, was eight years of age that summer, and was sent by emigrant friends to the Whitman Mission School at Waiilatpu (Walla Walla), where she remained until the massacre of the inmates in 1847. The confinement at the post doubtless irritated Bridger, as did the return visits to St. Louis; he longed for the trapping and tramping days. Therefore, as the trapping season approached in the fall of 1844, he gathered some raw recruits and set out over the mountains. There was just one place he had not visited, and that was Milk River in extreme northern Montana.

Charles Larpenteur, fur trader at Fort Union, at the mouth of the Yellowstone River (26), tells all we know of this journey. "Jim Bridger, being a great trapper, and having been told that there were many beaver on Milk River, thought of trying his luck in that direction. He left the mountains with a picked party of thirty men, all good trappers and Indian fighters. Nothing unusual transpired at Fort Union until about the month of November, 1844, when Bridger and his men made their appearance, having come from Milk River with the intention of passing the winter with us. Mr. Laidlaw, who was in charge at the time, offered him all the assistance he could afford to make his winter quarters pleasant and comfortable, and so Bridger pitched his camp about half a

mile from the fort. But he had been deceived by exaggerated reports of the quantity of beaver that could be had on Milk River, and his hunt had been a very poor one. The main substance of Bridger's conversation was his brave men, his fast horses, and his fights with Blackfeet, till we were induced to believe that, with such a party to defend us, there would be no danger for us in case of an attack by Sioux. At that time such affairs became quite frequent, and the Sioux generally came in large parties. Bridger soon had an opportunity to display the bravery of his men whom he had cracked up so highly. A few days before Christmas, 1844, a large war party made a raid on the band of horses belonging to the fort, running off six of them and wounding one of the guard in the leg with buckshot. The alarm was immediately given and the braves were mounted to pursue the Sioux. Bridger's clerk, who had been left in camp, came running into the fort out of breath, scared to death. 'Get up all the men you can! The Sioux are in camp—they are butchering us!' Mr. Denig and I, with a few men, all we could get, took our arms and ran with all our might to render what assistance we could. Finding that this was a case in which we had to be cautious, we went along under the steep bank of the river till we thought ourselves about opposite the camp, where we stopped to listen for the cries of the reported butchering. Hearing nothing, we cautiously raised our heads over the bank to see some of the performance. Neither seeing nor hearing anything, we came to the conclusion the murderous work had been done, and determined to go to the camp, expecting to find people cut to pieces and scalped. To our great surprise we saw nothing—not a sign that any Indians had been near the camp. Now assured that Bridger's brave clerk had lied, we returned to the fort laughing at his fright.

"During our absence on this dangerous sortie, Mr. Laidlaw was left alone—that is, without a clerk. I had in my hurry taken the key of the store with me and pressing demands were made for ammunition. Mr. Laidlaw, who was a fiery, quick tempered old Scotchman, smashed in the window of the retail store. Seeing this on our entrance we could not imagine what could have been the matter. No word had been received from Bridger's army, but we expected them to return with the recaptured horses and with scalps flying. But soon, to our great disappointment, came the report that a man had been killed; that a mare belonging to Mr. Ellingsworth, the opposition bookkeeper, had been shot through the hip, and that the Indians were daring the whites to fight. The opposition, who had seen Bridger's men turn out to fight, had concluded to join them. Mr. Ellingsworth had bought this fine American mare of Mr. Laidlaw, who had brought her here in the fall. An old half-breed Creek was also well mounted, and they both very soon came up with Bridger's party who had halted at the



BRIDGER'S NAME ON "NAMES HILL," near Labarge, Lincoln county, Wyoming. Much weathered carving believed made by Bridger himself, with some assistance, in 1844.—
Wyo. Hist. Dept.

foot of the hills. When Ellingsworth and the old man approached they saw the cause of the halt; the Sioux were on a hill making signs for them to come on and fight. By this time their party had been reinforced, and Bridger's men, not accustomed to deal with such a large force, declined the invitation. The old half-breed, who was clear grit, put the whip to his horse, telling the balance to come on; but only Ellingsworth followed. The Sioux, who understood this kind of warfare and expected the whites to accept the challenge, had left concealed in a ravine a small body of their party, ready to let fly in case the enemy attempted to come on. As the old Indian went by at full speed with Ellingsworth, the Indians fired a volley which dropped the former dead off his horse and wounded Ellingsworth's mare in the hip, but did not come so near killing her that Ellingsworth did not make his escape. The Indians seeing this commenced to yell and renewed their defiance, but the brave party concluded to turn back, somewhat ashamed of themselves. Bridger was extremely mortified and said he could not account for the cowardice of his men on this occasion. At the funeral of Gardepie—that being the name of the old man—these words were pronounced: "This burial is caused by the cowardice of Bridger's party." This expression it was thought would result in a fight with the opposition, but the discontentment disappeared without any disturbance. In the meantime the Sioux went away, having killed one man, wounded another's mare, and taken six head of horses. Bridger became very much dissatisfied with his men, who dispersed in all directions, and he returned to the mountains."

Fort Bridger was not at first occupied through the winter season, but there is little or no reliable clue as to where its owners and occupants did sojourn, nor where Bridger went from Fort Union that December. The season's furs were to be marketed, and the stock of merchandise was to be replenished; thus there is little doubt but that Bridger made an occasional trip to St. Louis; and that his people busied themselves through the winter making articles that sold so well to emigrants.

The first glimpse we have of the Fort Bridger establishment itself comes from Joel Palmer (27), a farmer, at the head of an Oregon emigrant train. On July 17, 1845, on the Sweetwater, Palmer comes up with Joseph R. Walker, bound for Fort Bridger. Walker had been with Bridger more or less as trapper and trader, and was then on the way to join Colonel John C. Fremont on the latter's third trip west.

"July 25, 1845. This day we traveled about sixteen miles, crossed the creek (Black's Fork) several times, and encamped near Fort Bridger," writes Palmer. "This is a trading fort owned by Bridger and Bascus (Vasquez). It is built of poles and daubed with mud; it is a shabby concern. Here are about twenty-five lodges of Indians, or rather white trappers' lodges occupied by their Indian wives. They have a good supply of robes, dressed deer, elk and antelope skins, coats, pants, moccasins, and other Indian fixens, which they trade low for flour, pork, powder, lead, blankets, butcher-knives, spirits, hats, ready-made clothes, coffee, sugar, etc. They ask for a horse twenty-five to fifty dollars in trade. Their wives are mostly of the Pyentes and Snake Indians. They have a herd of cattle, twenty-five or thirty goats, and some sheep. They generally abandon this fort during the winter months. At this place the bottoms are wide and covered with good grass. Cottonwood timber in plenty. The stream abounds with trout. July 26th. Remained at the fort the whole of this day."

Bridger had a party of trappers and traders out that spring, probably trapping the Snake and its territories, and gathering the furs from the Indians in that neighborhood, such as were not traded at Fort Hall. Palmer met this party on Bear River near Soda Springs on August 2, 1845. Bridger himself, however, was not with them.

A news item in the *Missouri Republican* of July 7th (92), says that "eight mackinaw boats, laden with buffalo robes, etc., with a company of thirty-six men under the charge of P. D. Papin, arrived at Fort Leavenworth, July 2d, from Fort John 'at the junction of the Laramie and Big Platte Rivers.' The crew and cargo were there transferred to the steamer *Tributary*, which arrived at St. Louis July 6th. The cargo comprised eleven hundred packs of buffalo robes, ten packs of beaver, and three packs of bear and wolf skins, consigned to P. Choteau, Jr. & Co. . . .

"Messrs. Vasquez and Bridger had arrived at Fort John, from Fort Hall (sic should be Fort Bridger) on Green River, 'one of the extreme western posts in the mountains,' before Papin left." Doubtless the proprietors of Fort Bridger contributed to the fur packs carried to St. Louis by Papin.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE DONNER PARTY AT FORT BRIDGER

FORT BRIDGER promptly became a sort of summer trading rendezvous for traders and trappers generally, including large numbers of Indians; they had become accustomed to meeting annually, and thus traders from over the mountains continued to come with their wares, to pick up a few furs in exchange; and we are led to see that the proprietors of the Fort Bridger establishment could not prevent this, no matter how excellent may have been their service, though Bridger did ultimately endeavor to acquire a Mexican grant of land on which he might have exclusive rights.

For the next insight into Fort Bridger and its people we are indebted to Edwin Bryant (28). "July 14, 1846. Our route this morning was across the plain some ten or twelve miles, when we struck the Big Sandy River, another affluent of the Green or Colorado. The emigrant trail known as 'Greenwood's Cut-Off,' leaves the old trail via Fort Bridger to Fort Hall at this point. It is said to shorten the distance on the Fort Hall route to Oregon and California some fifty or sixty miles. The objection to the route is that from Big Sandy to Green River, a distance of forty-five or fifty miles, there is no water.

"During our afternoon's march we fell in with a party of some sixty or eighty Shoshonee or Snake Indians, who were returning from a buffalo hunt to the east of South Pass. The chiefs and active hunters of the party were riding good horses. The others, among whom were some women, were mounted generally upon animals that appeared to have been nearly exhausted by fatigue. These, besides carrying their riders, were freighted with dried buffalo meat, suspended in equal divisions of weight and bulk from straps across the back. Several pack animals were loaded entirely with meat, and were driven along as we drive our pack mules. . . .

"We held out our hands in token of friendship, and they did the same, giving a most cordial shake, which ceremony with Indians is not usually expressive of a high degree of warmth and satisfaction. . . . Our conversation, of course, was carried on altogether in signs. Several of them asked for 'tobac.' I had a pound or two of tobacco in a small bag suspended from my saddle which I distributed among them, and it appeared to give them great satisfaction. They made signs inquiring if we had whiskey, by forming their hands into a

cup-shape, putting them to their mouths, and throwing their heads back as if in the act of drinking a long and refreshing draught. I shook my head in token that we had none.

"Among the party I noticed a very beautiful young female, the daughter of one of the chiefs of the party, who sat upon her horse with the ease and grace almost of a fairy. She was clothed in a buckskin shirt, pantaloons and moccasins, with some really tasteful ornaments suspended around her neck and delicate waist. It will be a long time before I forget the cheerful and attractive countenance, graceful figure, and vivacity of feature and language of this untutored child of nature.

"The Shoshonees or Snakes occupy the country immediately west of the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains, and their principal places of trading are Fort Hall, a post of the Hudson's Bay Company, and Fort Bridger, the establishment of an individual trader. There are other white traders among them, who, having intermarried with the Indians, change their positions according to circumstances. . . . We encamped on the bank of the Big Sandy.

"July 15, 1846. About eight miles from our last encampment we struck and forded Green River. . . . Continuing down the river we halted at noon to rest our animals under the shade of some large cottonwood trees. At half-past two o'clock, p. m., resuming our march we traveled about two miles farther down the stream and left it near a point where I saw the ruins of several log cabins, which I have since learned were erected some years ago by traders and trappers, and have subsequently been deserted. . . . Just before sunset we reached the summit of the ridge between Green River and Black's Fork, a tributary of the former. From this, at a distance of six or eight miles, we could see the last-named stream, and smoke rising from the fires of an emigrant encampment. We reached Black's Fork of Green River and encamped upon it some time after dark.

"July 16, 1846. . . . The trail crosses this stream several times during the day's march, leaving it as often to cut off the bends, and returning to it again. . . . Just before sunset we once more struck the stream on which we were traveling, and had a view of the landmarks which we supposed were near Fort Bridger. . . . We were overtaken by darkness some miles before reaching our destination for the day. . . . We proceeded onward, and finally saw the faint light of campfires, apparently very near, but really a long distance. . . . Proceeding on we reached the encampment of Mr. Hastings about eleven o'clock at night.

"July 17, 1846. We determined to encamp here for two or three days for the purpose of recruiting our animals, which, being heavily packed, manifest strong signs of fatigue. We pitched our tent for the first time since we left Fort Laramie near the camp of Messrs. Hastings and Hudspeth. These gentlemen left the

settlements of California the last of April, and traveling over the snows of the Sierra, and swimming the swollen watercourses on either side, reached this vicinity some two weeks since, having explored a new route via the south end of the Great Salt Lake, by which they suppose the distance to California is shortened from one hundred and fifty to two hundred miles. My impressions are unfavorable to the route, especially for wagons and families, but a number of the emigrant parties now encamped here have determined to adopt it with Messrs. Hastings and Hudspeth as their guides, and are now waiting for some of the rear parties to come up and join them.

“‘Fort Bridger,’ as it is called, is a small trading post, established and now occupied by Messrs. Bridger and Vasquez. The buildings are two or three miserable log cabins, rudely constructed, and bearing but a faint resemblance to habitable houses. Its position is in a handsome and fertile bottom of the small stream on which we are encamped, about two miles south of the point where the old wagon trail, via Fort Hall, makes an angle and takes a northwesterly course. The bottom produces the finest qualities of grass, and in great abundance. The water of the stream is cold and pure, and abounds in spotted mountain trout and a variety of other small fish. Clumps of cottonwood trees are scattered through the valley and along the banks of the stream. Fort Bridger is distant from the Pacific Spring, by our estimate, one hundred and thirty-three miles.

“About five hundred Snake Indians were encamped near the trading post this morning, but on hearing the news respecting the movements of the Sioux which we communicated to them, most of them left immediately for the purpose I suppose of organizing elsewhere a war party to resist the threatened invasion. There are a number of traders here from the neighborhood of Taos, and the headwaters of the Arkansas, who have brought with them dressed buckskins, buckskin shirts, pantaloons, and moccasins, to trade with the emigrants. The emigrant trade is a very important one to the mountain merchants and trappers. The countenances and bearing of these men, who have made the wilderness their home, are generally expressive of a cool, cautious but determined intrepidity. In a trade they have no consciences, taking all the ‘advantages,’ but in a matter of hospitality or generosity they are openhanded, ready, many of them, to divide with the needy what they possess.

“I was introduced today to Capt. (Joseph R.) Walker, of Jackson County, Missouri, who is much celebrated for his explorations and knowledge of the North American continent between the frontier settlements of the United States and the Pacific. Captain Walker is now on his return from the settlements of California, having been out with Captain Fremont in the capacity of guide or pilot. He is driving some four or five hundred California horses which

he intends to dispose of in the United States. They appear to be high-spirited animals, of medium size, handsome figures, and in good condition. It is possible that the trade in horses, and even in cattle, between California and the United States may at no distant day become of considerable importance. Captain Walker communicated to me some facts in reference to recent occurrences in California of considerable interest. He spoke discouragingly of the new route via the south end of the Salt Lake. Several emigrant parties have arrived here during the day and others have left, taking the old route, via Fort Hall. . . .

"July 18, 1846. We determined this morning to take the new route, via the south end of the great Salt Lake. Mr. Hudspeth, who with a small party on Monday will start in advance of the emigrant companies which intend traveling by this route for the purpose of making some further explorations, has volunteered to guide us as far as the Salt Plain, a day's journey west of the lake. Although such was my own determination, I wrote several letters to my friends among the emigrant parties in the rear advising them *not* to take this route, but to keep on the old trail, via Fort Hall. Our situation was different from theirs. We were mounted on mules, had no families, and could afford to hazard experiments and make explorations. They could not..

"During the day I visited several of the emigrant corrals. Many of the trappers and hunters now collected here were lounging about, making small trades for sugar, coffee, flour and whiskey. I heard of an instance of a pint of miserable whiskey being sold for a pair of buckskin pantaloons valued at \$10. I saw \$2 in money paid for half a pint.

"Several Indians visited our camp in parties of three or four at a time. An old man and two boys sat down near the door of our tent this morning and there remained without speaking, but watchful of every movement, for three or four hours. When dinner was over we gave them some bread and meat, and they departed without uttering a word. Messrs. Curry and Holder left us today, having determined to go to Oregon instead of California. Circles of white-tented wagons may now be seen in every direction, and the smoke from the campfires is curling upwards, morning, noon and evening. An immense number of oxen and horses are scattered over the entire valley, grazing upon the green grass. Parties of Indians, hunters, and emigrants are galloping to and fro, and the scene is one of almost holiday liveliness. It is difficult to realize that we are in a wilderness, a thousand miles from civilization. I noticed the lupin and a brilliant scarlet flower in bloom.

"July 19, 1846. Bill Smith, a noted mountain character, in a shooting match burst his gun, and he was supposed for some time to be dead. He recovered, however, and the first words he uttered upon returning to consciousness were that 'no d—d gun could kill

him.' The adventures, hazards and escapes of this man, with his eccentricities of character, as they were related to me, would make an amusing volume. I angled in the stream and caught an abundance of mountain trout and other small fish. . . .

"July 20, 1846. We resumed our march, taking in accordance with our previous determination, the new route already referred to. Our party consisted of nine persons. Mr. Hudspeth and three young men from the emigrant parties will accompany us as far as the Salt Plain. We ascended from the valley in which Fort Bridger is situated on the left of a high and rather remarkable butte which overlooks the fertile bottom from the west. There is no trail, and we are guided in our course and route by the direction in which Salt Lake is known to lie."

Bryant has thus very fully described the situation at Fort Bridger on the occasion of the arrival of the much chronicled Donner Party, many of whom perished in the Sierra Nevada mountains that winter. James Bridger and Louis Vasquez have been given a share of the responsibility for their tragic fate, though the accusation is by inference rather than direct information.

It is evident that neither Bridger nor Vasquez came into contact with the leaders of this party, since none of them mention the fact. J. Q. Thornton, whom Mrs. Donner-Houghton mentions, in his *Oregon and California*, does not mention Bridger; and C. F. McGlashan (30) makes a general statement without indicating the source of his information.

"At Fort Bridger, which was at this time a mere camp or trading post," says McGlashan, "the (Donner) party heard much commendation upon a new route, via Salt Lake. This route passed along the southern shore of the lake, and rejoined the old Fort Hall emigrant road on the Humboldt. It was said to shorten the distance three hundred miles. The new route was known as the Hastings Cut-Off, and was named after the famous Lansford W. Hastings, who was even then piloting a small company over the Cut-Off.

"The large trains delayed for three or four days at Fort Bridger, debating as to the best course to pursue. It is claimed that but for the earnest advice and solicitation of Bridger and Vasquez, who had charge of the fort, the entire party would have continued by the accustomed route. These men had a direct interest in the Hastings Cut-Off, as they furnished the emigrants with supplies and had employed Hastings to pilot the first company over the road to Salt Lake. After mature deliberation the party divided, the

greater portion going by Fort Hall and reaching California in safety. . . . Eighty-seven persons, however, took the Hastings Cut-Off."

Eliza P. Donner-Houghton (29) says: "On the 19th of July (1846) we reached the Little Sandy River and there found four distinct companies encamped in neighborly groups, among them our friends the Thorntons and Rev. Mr. Cornwall. Most of them were listed for Oregon, and were resting their cattle preparatory to entering upon the long, dry drive of forty miles known as 'Greenwood's Cut-Off.' There my father and others deliberated over a new route to California.

"They were led to do so by 'An Open Letter,' which had been delivered to our company on the 17th by special messenger on horseback. The letter was written by Lansford W. Hastings, author of 'Travel Among the Rocky Mountains Through Oregon and California.' It was dated and addressed 'At the Headwaters of the Sweetwater: To all California emigrants now on the road,' and intimated that on account of the war between Mexico and the United States the government of California would probably oppose the entrance of American emigrants to its territory, and urged those on the way to California to concentrate their numbers and strength and to take the new and better route which he had explored from Fort Bridger, by way of the south end of Salt Lake. It emphasized the statement that this new route was nearly two hundred miles shorter than the old one by way of Fort Hall and the headwaters of Ogden's River, and that he himself would remain at Fort Bridger to give further information and to conduct the emigrants through to the settlement.

"The proposition seemed so feasible, that after cool deliberation and discussion, a party was formed to take the new route. My father was elected captain of this company, and from that time on it was known as the 'Donner Party.' . . . All the companies broke camp and left the Little Sandy on the 20th of July. The Oregon division, with a section for California, took the right-hand trail for Fort Hall; and the Donner party, the left-hand trail to Fort Bridger. . . . Five days later the Donner party reached Fort Bridger, and were informed by Hastings' agent that he had gone forward as pilot to a large emigrant train, but had left instructions that all later arrivals should follow his trail. . . .

"At Fort Bridger my father took as a driver for one of his wagons John Baptiste Trubode, a sturdy young mountaineer, the offspring of a French father, a trapper, and a Mexican mother. John claimed to have a knowledge of the languages and customs of various Indian tribes through whose country we should have to pass, and urged that his knowledge might prove helpful to the company. The trail from the fort was all that could be desired, and on the 3rd of August we reached the crossing of the Weber River."

CHAPTER XXX

THE MORMONS CONFER WITH BRIDGER

JAMES BRIDGER'S fame in Utah has for some seventy years rested pretty squarely on the utterance attributed to him in which he presumably prophesied that the Mormon pioneers could not grow grain in the Salt Lake valley; and that he would give a thousand dollars for a bushel of corn raised by them. The authenticity of the remark has been open to doubt since the diaries of members of the Mormon pioneer band did not mention it, but presented material from which it could readily have been paraphrased.

However, the celebrated statement appears in the official journal of Willard Richards, church historian, and member of the Pioneer party, as follows: "June 28, 1847. Traveled $15\frac{1}{4}$ miles. Met Capt. James Bridger who said he was ashamed of Fremont's map of this country. Bridger considered it imprudent to bring a large population into the Great Basin until it was ascertained that grain could be raised; he said he would give one thousand dollars for a bushel of corn raised in the basin." (MS. Hist. of Brigham Young, 1847, p. 95.)

Thus it has been urged that the statement is an actual repetition of Bridger's words, as it seems from the above to be, though its use apparently did not begin for some years after the Saints settled in Utah. It was especially employed by the Church authorities in encouraging the membership to persevere through hardships, and to suggest to them the probability that the climate might be modified for their benefit, and in some manner they would be enabled to raise the crops needed.

The facts seem to be that the summer nights are too cool for the most successful growing of Missouri field corn as Bridger observed; though through a process of scientific selection, corn varieties have been developed which mature good yields in Utah, in verification of Brigham Young's oft repeated prediction.

Brigham Young had no small task in keeping his people contented in those early and troublesome days, and his great resources as a natural leader were often heavily taxed. Typical of his inspiring speeches to his people, is the following taken from an address delivered in Salt Lake City on July 24, 1852, the fifth anniversary of their arrival in Utah:

"When we first approached this valley there was not a man upon the face of the earth who ever had beheld these valleys of the mountains, or knew anything of the Great Basin, who knew that corn, or any other kind of grain could be raised here. Can you find the man who had any knowledge of the Great Basin, as it is called, that believed there could be an ear of corn ripened in it? There is not that man on the earth, when you have excepted the people called the Latter Day Saints." (98)

President Young had for the moment overlooked the fact or was not aware of it, that a settler had corn in tassel at the site of Ogden, and that Indians were growing both corn and wheat "in abundance" in central and southern Utah, when the Mormons arrived in the basin. But it is chiefly significant for the present purpose to notice that he did not mention Bridger's name, nor the thousand dollar offer, in this address.

Heber C. Kimball, counselor to Brigham Young in the church presidency, seems to have made first use of the sentence, so far as published history goes, this being in Salt Lake City on December 27, 1857 (98), his speech being in part as follows:

"Do I believe that this land will produce cotton? Yes, just as well as the land down in the southern country. God can change the climate for the benefit and salvation of Saints. There never was an ear of corn raised here till we came, and nobody would believe that we could raise any. Bridger offered Brother Brigham a thousand dollars for an ear of corn raised in the valley. The mountaineers had not confidence enough in God to put the seed into the earth, but we have almost produced anything that we have tried; and there has been cotton raised up north in this valley. Bless you, it is colder up north than it is here."

Kimball's Biographer, in 1888, (31) refers to the celebrated interview with Bridger, and without actually quoting, writes as follows: "(Bridger) gave them (the Mor-

mon leaders) some information, mostly of a discouraging character, in regard to the region toward which they were traveling, and in conclusion said that he would give a thousand dollars for the first bushel of wheat raised in the Salt Lake Valley." In this case the offer is for wheat instead of corn.

Brigham Young made use of the sentence, in an address to the saints in Wellsville, Cache county, June 7, 1860, (98) making an effort to encourage the settlers and make them satisfied with their circumstances. He said in part:

"You may inquire why this land has so long been held in reserve, the design in this country's not being settled by white people until recently. Until the Latter Day Saints came here not a person among all the mountaineers and those who had traveled here, so far as we could learn, believed that an ear of corn would ripen in these valleys. We know that corn and wheat produce abundantly here, and we know that we have an excellent region wherein to raise cattle, horses, and every other kind of domestic animal that we need.

"We also knew this when we came here thirteen years ago this summer.

"Bridger said to me: 'Mr. Young, I would give a thousand dollars if I knew that an ear of corn could be ripened in these mountains. I have been here twenty years, and have tried it in vain, over and over again.' I told him if he would wait a year or two we would show him what could be done. A man named Wells, living with Miles Goodyear, where now is Ogden City, had a few beans growing, and carried water from the river in a pail to irrigate them."

Another typical statement was made by President Young in Salt Lake City May 29, 1870: (98) "We had to have faith to come here. When we met Mr. Bridger on the Big Sandy River, said he: 'Mr. Young, I would give a thousand dollars if I knew an ear of corn could be ripened in the Great Basin.' Said I: 'Wait eighteen months and I will show you many of them.'

"Did I say this from knowledge? No; it was my faith. But we had not the least encouragement, from natural reasoning and all that we could learn of this country, of its sterility, its cold and frost, to believe that we could ever raise anything. We had faith that we could raise grain;

was there any harm in this? Not at all. If we had not had faith, what would have become of us? We would have gone down in unbelief, have closed up every resource for our sustenance, and should never have raised anything."

Brigham Young not only used the statement frequently, as did the other Mormon leaders, but the rank and file of Mormon speakers and writers took it up later; and then non-Mormon writers began its use. Indeed this thousand dollar remark has been wafted on the winds of a hundred thousand repetitions of speech and type; and it has been variously harnessed to a kernel of wheat, a head of wheat, a bushel of wheat, a sack of wheat, an ear of corn, a bushel of corn, a load of corn, and even a car of corn! To enumerate the instances would be like attaching Bridger's name to each kernel of grain annually produced in this fertile valley.¹⁹

The following quotations from the journals of various Mormons not only give the major facts of the conference in which this thousand dollar remark originated, but they give as well one of the best views of Fort Bridger, and of Bridger himself, that are now available.

19. Peter Huntsman Fillmore, Utah, writes August 5, 1924, in part as follows:

"My first acquaintance with James Bridger was in 1851, near Green River, Wyoming, at old Fort Bridger. He then had located a trading post for the Indians and immigrants. That was in the month of September, as I now recall it. I was with my father, James Huntsman. I was a lad about thirteen years of age at that time. My father made inquiries about the Great Salt Lake Valley; and I heard Mr. Bridger tell my father that the valley was very cold and frosty, and that they could not raise anything there.

"He, Mr. Bridger, made this remark: that he would give one hundred dollars for the first ear of corn that was raised in Salt Lake Valley.

"He had large piles of furs and buffalo hides piled up high like cord wood. He must have had several hundred buffalo hides besides piles of beaver pelts, and other kinds of furs, perhaps thousands of them. He traded for them from the Indians. It was sure a sight to see so many furs and buffalo hides."

"The next time I saw Mr. Bridger was about the middle of April, 1864. He had and was conducting a ferry boat on Green River. The river at that time was very high and he charged us \$1.50 (?) for each wagon; we swam our horses and mules; there were fifty wagons in our company at that time.

"At that time I bought of Mr. Bridger a fine tanned buffalo hide for \$7. I then called his attention to the remark he made to my father in 1851, that he would pay \$100 for the first ear of corn raised in Salt Lake Valley. He said that he was of the opinion that it was too cold a climate to raise anything in the valley.

Bridger was on the way from Fort Bridger to Fort Laramie, on June 28, 1847, when, at the Little Sandy, he met Brigham Young and the Mormon pioneer party, fleeing to the mountains from their Missouri persecutors.

The Latter Day Saints were armed with Col. John C. Fremont's maps and journals, together with other first hand information; but they had looked for many wearisome weeks on the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, and human hope was in need of reassurance as the journey lengthened. Thus they had looked forward to this meeting with the Nestor of the Rockies, whom they had understood was an authority on the Salt Lake valley, their proposed destination.

Although the sun was yet high when they met, both parties bivouacked hard by and began a series of conferences. Bridger dented the dough of a rising empire by pointing out gross inaccuracies in Fremont's maps; and he was ignorant of the belief of the Mormons that they were being divinely guided, when he cautioned against a general hegira to the Salt Lake valley on faith alone. It was as if an Egyptian with a homestead in the promised land had halted a heaven-guided Israelitish

"The following September, of 1864, on my return to Salt Lake Valley I laid over three days at his place on Green River. I became better acquainted with him and his family. He had a nice family, and several little children playing around. The river was so low that we forded it with our wagons. We were loaded with machinery; threshing machines and other merchandise, for Kimball & Lawrence, Salt Lake merchants. These were the first threshing machines ever brought to the Salt Lake Valley, and my machine the first threshing machine brought to Millard county.

"We talked about what we could raise at that time. We could raise corn, wheat, and all kinds of produce. He said he surely was surprised at the change in the climate of Salt Lake Valley. I told Mr. Bridger at that time that God had changed the climate of the valley, and the Rocky Mountains, so that the Mormons could build up great cities and make good homes for His people to live in. He replied that God or some ruling power must have changed the climate of Salt Lake Valley, as he thought it too cold to ever produce anything.

"I merely mention these facts so you may know that I did know James Bridger and family."

The reward alleged to have been offered by Bridger to the Mormons for the first grain grown in the Salt Lake Valley, is mentioned in numerous writings, including Stenhouse's *Rocky Mountain Saints*, p. 256; Tullidge's *Life of Brigham Young*, p. 166; Jenson's *L. D. S. Church Chronology*, p. 33; Whitney's 4-volume *History of Utah*, Volume 1, p. 317; *Mormon Handbook of Reference for Strangers*, p. 65, and Whitney's *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, p. 388.

band in the desert and given its Moses a few bits of advice.

Bridger's frank comments on this early occasion may have thus formed the entering wedge between him and the Saints.

ORSON PRATT'S JOURNAL

Orson Pratt (32) introduces the pioneer party of Saints to Bridger in his extracted journal. "June 2, 1847. . . . (2 miles below Fort Laramie.) By a small party from Fort Bridger on the other side of the South Pass we learned that two weeks since the snow was several feet deep on the Sweetwater and among the mountains. They were obliged to leave their wagons in charge of a portion of their company, and rush through with their horses to this place in order to find grass to sustain them; the most of them had just left on their return for their wagons."

"June 8th, 1847. . . . (At an encampment above Fort Laramie.) About one mile from our encampment a small company of wagons loaded with peltries and furs from Fort Bridger on the other side of the Rocky Mountains were encamped. They were going to Fort Laramie."

"June 26, 1847. . . . (At Pacific Springs.) A few rods from us were encamped a small company of men from Oregon on their way to the States. They were performing the journey on horseback, and had left the settlements in Oregon on the 5th of May. Major [Moses (Black)?] Harris, a trapper and hunter, accompanied them to this point, and from here he intended to act as a guide to some of the emigrant companies if they wished to employ him. Having wandered and resided in different parts of this mountainous country for twenty or twenty-five years, he had acquired an extensive and intimate knowledge of all the main features of the country to the Pacific. We obtained much information from him in relation to the great interior basin of the Salt Lake, the country of our destination. His report, like that of Fremont's, is rather unfavorable to the formation of a colony in this basin, principally on account of the scarcity of timber. He said that he had traveled the whole circumference of the lake, and that there was no outlet to it."

"June 28th, 1847. . . . (Two miles west of Pacific Springs.) Major Harris still remains in our camp, and has succeeded in selling many of his peltries, but he intends to leave us today. . . . Traveled this forenoon thirteen and one-half miles. . . . Soon after we left our morning's encampment we came to the forks of the Oregon road; we took the southern one. We halted for noon at the ford of the Little Sandy, which is now about thirty inches deep and thirty-five feet wide, with a sandy bottom. In the afternoon

traveled one and three-fourths miles, and met Mr. Bridger with a small company going to Fort Laramie on business. He encamped with us during the night, and being a man of extensive acquaintance with this interior country, we made many inquiries of him in relation to the great basin and the country south. His information was rather more favorable than that of Major Harris."

At this point, James A. Little (34), reviewing Pratt's original journal, without breaking the continuity of the narrative, adds: "While partaking of breakfast with Mr. Young, Colonel Bridger remarked, 'There is more bread on the table than I have before seen for years.' 'But, Mr. Bridger, how do you live?' inquired Mr. Young. He replied, 'We live entirely on meat. We dry our deer and buffalo to eat, and also cook fresh when we can obtain it. We usually have our coffee, for that is easily obtained.'"

"July 4, 1847 (32). . . . (Three miles below ferry on Green River.) "In the afternoon thirteen soldiers, all belonging to the Church, came into the camp, accompanied by those of the Twelve that went back to the ferry where they were met. These thirteen had been detached by Captain Brown to go in advance of the main body (the Mormon Battalion in New Mexico) in order to obtain some horses that had been stolen from them while at Pueblo. The thieves, they had learned, were at Bridger's trading post on Muddy Fork, a few miles southwest from this."

"July 7, 1847. . . . Nine Indian lodges stood a few rods distant, occupied by the families of the trappers and hunters, who have taken squaws for wives. Some few half-breed children were seen playing about their lodges. Bridger's trading post is situated half a mile due west of these lodges on an island. The main camp having arrived we passed over four branches of Black's Fork without any road but a footpath. Three-quarters of a mile brought us to the door of Bridger's. We here turned to the south, and crossing three more branches, camped within half a mile of the post. Black's Fork is here broken up into quite a number of streams, forming a number of islands, all containing seven hundred to eight hundred acres of most excellent grass, with considerable timber, principally cottonwood and willow."

"Bridger's post consists of two adjoining log houses, dirt roofs, and a small picket yard of logs set in the ground, and about eight feet high. The number of men, squaws, and half-breed children in these houses and lodges may be about fifty or sixty. . . . July 8th. . . . Our blacksmiths are busily engaged in setting wagon tires, shoeing horses, etc., and preparing for a rough mountainous road in a southwest direction towards the Salt Lake. . . . July 9th. . . . We again resumed our journey, taking Mr. Hasting's new route to the Bay of St. Francisco; this route is but dimly seen, as only a few wagons passed over it last season."

"July 10th. . . . (On divide between Muddy and Bear Rivers.) Just before our encampment, as I was wandering alone upon one of the hills examining the various geological formations, I discovered a smoke some two miles from our encampment, which I expected arose from some small Indian encampment. I informed some of our men and they immediately went to discover who they were; they found them to be a small party from the Bay of St. Francisco on their way home to the States. They were accompanied by Mr. Miles Goodyear, a mountaineer, as far as this point, where Mr. Goodyear learning from us that the Oregon emigration was earlier than usual, and that they, instead of coming by way of Bridger's had taken the more northern route, concluded to go down Bear River and intersect them for the purpose of trade. . . . July 11th. Mr. Goodyear went down Bear River."²⁰

HOWARD EGAN'S REPORT

It will be interesting to see the Mormon-Bridger conference through the eyes of Maj. Howard Egan, also a member of the pioneer band (35).

"Sunday, June 27, 1847. . . . One of the mountaineers is traveling with us today. He wants to pilot some of the companies to Oregon. He has two pack mules loaded with skins to trade. His name is Harris. He gives a very discouraging account of Bear River Valley and the surrounding country. He said, 'It is destitute of timber or vegetation, and the country is sandy, nothing growing there but wild sage. . . .'"

"Monday, June 28th. The morning was fair, and many of the brethren are trading with Mr. Harris for buckskins. I tried to trade with him, but I considered them too high. He sold them for \$1.50 to \$2, and made into pants, \$3. and \$4. At 7:30 we proceeded on our journey, Mr. Harris waiting for the Oregon company to come up. . . . About 1:40 we arrived at the Little Sandy and stopped on its east bank to feed. . . . At 5:15 we commenced fording the river, and at 5:45 all the wagons were over safely, with no other loss than two tar buckets."

"After traveling a short distance we were met by Mr. Bridger, the principal man of the fort which bears his name, on his way to Fort John, near Fort Laramie, accompanied by two men. As we wished to make some inquiries about the country, he said if we would encamp he would stay with us all night. We turned off the road a quarter of a mile and encamped near the Sandy at 6 o'clock, having come a mile and three-quarters, and during the day fifteen and a quarter miles. We found the feed pretty good.

20. Miles Goodyear established a ranch and hostelry in 1841 at the old Salt Lake rendezvous (Ogden), securing a Spanish grant of the land. This was sold to a Mormon named Brown on June 6, 1848.

Soon after we encamped the Twelve and some others went to Mr. Bridger to make some inquiries about the country. I understand that it was impossible to form a correct idea from the very imperfect and irregular way in which he gave the description."

"My health has been very poor for the last two days. I have been afflicted with a very severe headache, but feel a little better this evening. As I had not washed my clothing for some time, I was under the necessity of washing this evening, and did not get through until after dark. After I ate supper I went down to where Mr. Bridger was encamped, and from his appearance and conversation, I should not take him to be a man of truth. In his description of Bear River Valley and the surrounding country, which was very good, he crossed himself a number of times. He said that Harris knew nothing about that part of the country. He says there is plenty of timber there; that he had made sugar for the last twenty years where Harris said there was no timber of any kind. But it is my opinion that he spoke not knowing about the place, that we can depend on nothing until we see for ourselves."

[An illustration of a half dozen fine ears of flint corn appears at this point in the publication (35) entitled, "Corn for Jim Bridger at \$1,000 An Ear."]

"Wednesday, July 7th. . . . At 1:40 we started again, and after traveling seven and a half miles we came in sight of a number of Indian lodges on the south side of the road. The most of them are occupied by half-breed traders. There are also American traders here. One of them, Mr. Goodall, was one who passed us at the Platte River. We continued on and crossed four streams that would average about a rod wide, the current being very swift, when we arrived at Fort Bridger, which is three hundred and ninety-seven miles from Fort John. We came about half mile past the fort and encamped, after crossing three more creeks. This afternoon we traveled eight and three-quarters miles, and during the day seventeen and three-quarters miles. Grass is much higher at this place than we have generally seen it. The whole region seems to be filled with rapid streams, all bending their way to the principal fork. They all doubtless originate from the melting snows in the mountains."

"Bridger's Fort is composed of two log houses, about forty feet long each, and joined by a pen for horses, about ten feet high, and constructed by placing poles upright in the ground close together. There are several Indian lodges close by, and a full crop of young children playing around the doors. The Indians are said to be the Snake tribe. . . . July 8th. The morning was fine, but the wind was high. It was thought best to stop here today to set some wagon tires, and let the brethren have an opportunity

to trade. I traded off two rifles, one belonging to Brother Whipple, and one to Brother G. Billings, for nineteen buckskins and three elk skins and some other articles for making moccasins. . . . July 9th. We started at 8 o'clock on our journey westward."

WILFORD WOODRUFF'S JOURNAL

Wilford Woodruff (36), who later became president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, was also a member of the Mormon pioneer party, and from him a few other facts from a different viewpoint are obtained. He writes:

"June 27, 1847. . . . It was Sunday morning, but we harnessed up our teams and drove to where Brothers Pratt and Smith had camped with Major Harris (Pacific Springs), who had been traveling through Oregon and California for twenty-five years, and had a wide acquaintance with the country. He brought a file of Oregon papers, and one published by S. Brannon of California. We had a great deal of conversation with him. He spoke unfavorably of the Salt Lake country for a settlement, but spoke of other places not far off that were good."

"We parted with Major Harris the next day, after doing some trading with him, and in our afternoon's travel met Mr. Bridger, of the fort, on the way with men going to Fort Laramie. He was expecting us, and wished to have an interview with President Young and the Twelve. We also wished to have an interview with him. We immediately returned to the creek upon which we had nooned, and camped for the night; Mr. Bridger and his men camped with us."

"We met in council with Mr. Bridger [Woodruff was one of the Twelve Apostles], and spent some hours in conversation, and found him to be a great traveler, possessing an extensive knowledge of nearly all Oregon and California (then including Utah and Idaho), the mountains, lakes, rivers, springs, valleys, mines, ore, etc. He spoke more highly of the great basin for a settlement than Major Harris had done. He said it was his Paradise, and that if these people settled in it he would settle with them; and that there was but one thing that could operate against its becoming a great grain country, and that would be frost, as he did not know but the frost might affect the corn. He conversed with us about a great variety of subjects connected with the country; said he was ashamed of the maps of Fremont, who knew nothing about the country, only the plain traveled road, and that he could correct all the maps published of the western world."

"We parted next day from Mr. Bridger, who remarked that it would not be prudent to bring a great population to the basin until we ascertained whether grain would grow or not. . . . We left Green River on the 5th. . . . Next evening we camped on the

west side of Hams Fork, which we crossed on the following day, and drove to Fort Bridger. . . . In the afternoon I went to Bridger's house and traded off my flint-lock rifle for four buffalo robes which were very large, nice, and well dressed. I found things generally at least one-third higher than I had ever known them at any other trading post I ever saw in America."

"The night of the 10th we camped one and one-half miles from Bear River. . . . Campfires were discovered about three miles from our camping ground, and George A. Smith and others went over to them and found them to be in the camp of a Mr. Miles Good-year. He had settled at Salt Lake and had a garden and vegetables, he said, doing well. Several Missourians were with him going to the States."

WILLIAM CLAYTON'S JOURNAL

The journal of William Clayton, secretary to the first presidency, (37) may reflect something of the official viewpoint of the party, if such viewpoint existed, though much, if not most, of the journal was unofficial. This is by far the most detailed account of the travels of the Mormon Church while it was "on wheels," and in it we have a reporter's running narrative of Bridger's extended talk to the Saints. It is as if Bridger were speaking, in places.

"Sunday (June) 27th (1847). . . . Mr. Harris says he is well acquainted with the Bear River valley and the region around the Salt Lake. From his description, which is very discouraging, we have little chance to hope for even a moderately good country anywhere in those regions. He speaks of the whole region as being sandy and destitute of timber and vegetation except the wild sage. He gives the most favorable account of a small region under the Bear River mountains called the Cache valley, where they have practised caching their robes, etc., to hide them from the Indians. He represents this as being a fine place to winter cattle. . . . Mr. Harris has described a valley forty miles above the mouth of the Bear River, and thirty miles below the Beer Springs, which might answer our purpose pretty well if the report is true. It is about thirty miles long and fifteen miles wide, and tolerably well timbered. We generally feel that we shall know best by going ourselves, for the reports of travelers are so contradictory it is impossible to know which is the truth without going to prove it."

"Monday, June 28, 1847. Morning fine, but cool. Many of the brethren are trading with Mr. Harris for pants, jackets, shirts, etc., made of buckskins, and also the skins themselves. He sells them high. The skins at \$1.50 and \$2; a pair of pants \$3., etc. He will take rifles, powder, lead, caps or calico and domestic shirts in exchange, but puts his own price on both sides, and it is difficult to

obtain even a fair trade. At 7:30 we proceeded on our journey, Mr. Harris waiting for the other companies. . . . ”

“(After crossing the Little Sandy.) . . . We then proceeded on, expecting to go about eight miles farther, but after traveling a little over a mile we were met by Elder G. A. Smith, who introduced us to Mr. Bridger, of Bridger’s Fort, on his way to Fort John in company with two of his men. Mr. Bridger being informed that we had designed to call at his place to make some inquiries about the country, etc., he said if we would turn off the road here and camp, he would stay with us till morning. A camping place being selected we turned off from the road about a quarter of a mile and formed our encampment near the Sandy at 6 o’clock, having traveled this afternoon one and three-quarters miles, exclusive of allowance for leaving the road, and during the day fifteen and a quarter miles. We have pretty good feed here, enough to fill the teams well. A while after we camped, the Twelve and several others went to Mr. Bridger to make some inquiries concerning our future route, the country, etc. It was impossible to form a correct idea of either from the very imperfect and irregular way he gave his descriptions, but the general items are in substance as follows.”

“We will find better grass as we proceed farther on. His business is to Fort Laramie. His traders have gone there with robes, skins, etc., to fill a contract, but having started later than they intended, the men at Laramie have taken advantage of the delay and he is going to see to the business himself. There is no blacksmith shop at his fort at present. There was one but it was destroyed. There have been nearly a hundred wagons gone on the Hasting’s route through Weber’s Fork. They cross the Black’s Fork and go a little south of west from his place, and pass below the mountains which cross Green River.”

“The Green River extends over an extent of country of four hundred miles. It is impossible for wagons to follow down Green River; neither can it be followed with boats. Some have gone down with canoes, but had great difficulty getting back on account of the rapid current and rough channel. Cannot pass the mountains close to the river even with horses. For some distance beyond this chain of mountains the country is level, and beyond that it is hard, black rock which looks as if it were glazed when the sun shines on it, and so hard and sharp it will cut a horse’s feet to pieces.”

“When we get below the mountains the Green River falls into a level country for some distance, after which it winds through a mountainous country, perfectly barren, to the Gulf of California. From Bridger’s Fort to the Salt Lake, Hastings said it was about one hundred miles. He (Bridger) has been through fifty times, but can form no correct idea of the distance. Mr. Hasting’s route

leaves the Ogden route at this place. We can pass the mountains farther south, but in some places we would meet with heavy bodies of timber and would have to cut our way through."

"In the Bear River valley there is oak timber, sugar trees, cottonwood, pine and maple. There is not an abundance of sugar maple, but plenty of as splendid pine as he ever saw. There is no timber on the Utah Lake, only on the streams which empty into it. In the outlet of the Utah Lake, which runs into the Salt Lake, there is an abundance of blue grass and red and white clover. The outlet of Utah Lake does not form a large river, neither a rapid current, but the water is muddy and low banks."

"Some of his men have been around the lake in canoes. They went out hunting, and had their horses stolen by the Indians. They then went around the lake in canoes hunting beaver, and were three months going around it. They said it was five hundred and fifty miles around it. The Utah tribe of Indians inhabit the region around Utah Lake and are a bad people. If they catch a man alone, they are sure to rob and abuse him, if they don't kill him; but parties of men are in no danger. They are mostly armed with guns."

"There was a man opened a farm in the Bear River valley. The soil is good, and likely to produce corn, were it not for the excessive cold nights, which he thinks would prevent the growth of corn. There is a good country south of the Utah Lake, or southeast of the great basin. There are three large rivers which enter into the Sevier Lake, unknown to travelers. There is also a splendid range of country on the north side of the California mountains, calculated to produce every kind of grain and fruit, and there are several places where a man might pass from it over the mountains to the California settlements in one day. There is a vast abundance of timber and plenty of coal in this region near the mountains."

"North of the California mountains there is walnut, oak, ash, hickory, and various kinds of good timber on and in the neighborhood of the mountains and streams southeast of the great basin. There can be a wagon road made through to it, and no lack of water. The great desert extends from the Salt Lake to the Gulf of California, which is perfectly barren. He supposes it to have been an arm of the sea. The three rivers before mentioned are southwest of the desert."

"There is a tribe of Indians in that country who are unknown to either travelers or geographers. They make farms and raise abundance of grain of various kinds. He can buy any quantity of the very best wheat there. This country lies southeast of the Salt Lake. There is one mountain (valley?) in that region, and the country adjoining, in which he considers if ever there was a

Promised Land, that must be it. There is a kind of cedar grows on it which bears fruit something like juniper berries, of a yellow color and about the size of an ordinary plum. The Indians grind the fruit and make the best kind of meal. He could easily gather a hundred bushels off one tree. He has lived on this fruit, and used to pick his hat full in a very short time."

"There are a great many little streams head in this mountain, and many good springs. It is about twenty days' travel with horses from the Salt Lake, but the country to it is bad to get through, and over a great part of it nothing for animals to subsist on. He supposes there might be access to it from Texas. On one of the rivers there is a splendid copper mine, a whole mountain of it. It also abounds in gold, silver, and has a good quick-silver mine. There is iron, coal, etc. The land is good; the soil rich. All the valleys abound with persimmons, and grapes which will make 'he best kind of wines."

"He never saw any grapes on the Utah Lake, but there are plenty of cherries and berries of several kinds. He thinks the Utah Lake is the best country in the vicinity of the Salt Lake, and the country is still better the farther south we go, until we meet the desert, which is upwards of two hundred miles south from the Utah Lake. There is plenty of timber on all the streams and mountains, and abundance of fish in the streams. There is timber all around the Utah Lake, and plenty of good grass, not much of the wild sage, only in small patches. Wild flax grows in most of the valleys, and they are the richest lands. He passed through that country a year ago last summer in the month of July (1845), and they generally had one or two showers every day, sometimes a heavy thundershower, but not accompanied by strong wind."

"By following under the mountain south of the Utah Lake we find another river, which enters into another lake about fifty miles south of the Utah Lake. We shall find plenty of water from here to Bridger's Fort, except after we cross Green River and travel five miles beyond it, where we shall have to travel eighteen or twenty miles without water, but there is plenty of grass. After crossing Green River we follow down it four or five miles to the old station, then cross over to a stream which heads in the mountains west. The station is more than half way from here to his place. We shall have no streams to ferry between here and the Fort except Green River."

"The Indians south of the Utah Lake and this side of the desert raise corn, wheat, and other kinds of grain, and produce in abundance. The Utahs abound more on the west of the mountains near the Salt Lake than on the east side, ten to one, but we have no need to fear them, for we can drive the whole of them in twenty-

four hours, but he would not kill them, he would make slaves of them. The Indians south of the Utah Lake raise as good corn, wheat and pumpkins as were ever raised in old Kentucky. He knows of a lead mine between the mountains and Laramie, on a timbered creek near Horseshoe Creek. He has found lead there, and thinks there is considerable silver in it. It can be found in a cave on the side of the mountain not far from the road."

"Such was the information we obtained from Mr. Bridger, but we shall know more about things, and have a better understanding, when we have seen the country ourselves. Supper had been provided for Mr. Bridger and his men, and the latter having eaten, the council dismissed, Mr. Bridger going with President Young to supper, the remainder retiring to their wagons, conversing over the subjects touched upon."

No wonder Bridger's dissertation was confusing to some of them! He was talking about the western third of the continent, which was as familiar to him as the fields of a large farm. Clayton's most excellent report of this interview gives us one of the most intimate and satisfactory contacts with Bridger obtainable at this late day; his precise jottings, as nearly as possible, following Bridger's talk, makes the interview one of exceptional value, as showing the breadth of Bridger's travels and knowledge.

It appears, however, that the chief of scouts was not invited to accompany nor to follow the pilgrims in the direction of what he had told them was his paradise. A coolness pervaded the atmosphere between them in the following years, which terminated in near-hostilities within a few years. He was evidently made to feel that Utah would not be a congenial place for him when he decided to retire from the mountains. Such, indeed, are the ironies of destiny, that while the Mormons were at the moment leaving their own idea of a paradisaical place by expulsion (Independence, Missouri, being believed by them to be the site of the ancient Garden of Eden), the ways so parted subsequently that Bridger almost exchanged paradises with them, and spent his declining days in the vicinity of Independence.

CHAPTER XXXI

BRIDGER'S HOME AND FAMILIES

BRIDGER remained at his fort on Black's Fork through the winter of 1847-48, it is evident, from the fact that Joseph L. Meek found him there toward the winter's close. Meek was on his way to the States from the mouth of the Columbia, to communicate to the authorities the facts of the Wailatpu massacre, and to solicit aid against the Indians. On the way he discovered and interred the remains of Doctor and Mrs. Whitman, superintendents of the mission school, and of his own daughter, Helen Mar Meek.

After an exhausting journey through the snow, Meek and his two companions arrived at Fort Bridger, and was welcomed by his old comrade, the proprietor. There was much to talk about, after their long separation, and it is quite probable that Meek at that time communicated to Bridger the first authentic intelligence of the massacre, and the fate of Mary Ann Bridger. After a brief rest and a generous feast or two, Bridger sent the party on the way with two extra mules, laden with provisions, and two mules for use as riding animals.

After the waning of the summer activities at Fort Bridger in 1848, it has been claimed that Bridger journeyed to St. Louis on business; and while on the way, he stopped off at Kansas City and purchased a farm. This proposed retiring place, when he should at last leave the mountains, was located near Little Santa Fe, or New Santa Fe, on the state line, about fifteen miles south of the mouth of the Kaw River; that is, a few miles due south of the present city limits of Kansas City, Missouri. He was back at Fort Bridger that fall, however, and probably remained there through the winter with his family.

WILLIAM KELLY AT FORT BRIDGER

William Kelly (9) and a party of travelers, on nearing the South Pass in June, 1849, met Bridger's partner, Vasquez, who

had gone out to trade with the oncoming emigrants. "A lot of us spent the evening in M. Vasquez' quarters, who gave us minute details of the route to Fort Bridger, as by his advice we took that line to Salt Lake in preference to the Fort Hall or northern route. He is a Frenchman, the partner of Mr. Bridger in the fort or trading post, which they established many years since, making a large fortune in bartering their baubles for skins and valuable furs. And now that they have achieved the object of their enterprise, they have contracted such a liking for the life in the wilderness to banish all desire of enjoying the luxuries their wealth would procure them, contented and happy in the society of their unlettered neighbors, whose friendship and affections they possess.

"M. Vasquez met us here by accident, for he came on a speculation with a number of horses, hoping to find good customers in the emigrants, who he foresaw would stand in need of recruiting their teams after one thousand miles of travel, and I have no doubt he made a good thing of it. We exchanged three of our most crippled nags, giving boot, which he was anxious to get in flour and coffee, but these we could not spare. He congratulated us on getting through the Crows unscathed, even with our full number, but designated it sheer madness to have attempted it only four strong. The United States government have made him a proposition to purchase the fort as a military station, to keep those savages in check, and I should think it will result in a bargain, as the Indians here can barely now get enough of skins for covering, much less for barter."

Moving on westward through the Pass, and across Green River. "We reached the plain on which Fort Bridger stands early next day (about June 14, 1849), and as we emerged from the atmosphere of artemisia and got good water, together with the luxury of a little milk for the invalids, we all felt a change for the better before evening, and were able to partake of a little supper. I cannot imagine how the term fort came to be applied to those trading stations, for they have no one point of resemblance to such a structure, Fort Bridger being even more completely destitute than the others of any such feature. It is simply composed of a few log huts, closely huddled together, without as much as a loophole to discharge a musket through.

"In one of these Mr. Bridger lives with his Indian wife, M. Vasquez' family occupied another, a third was a store, and the fourth contained a good forge and a rude carpenter's shop. We stopped a day to rest, for the beneficial effects the air seemed to have on the ailing men, and to make amends to the animals on the good pasture for the poor fare they had since we left Green River. Mr. Bridger permitted us the use of his workshops to make some

little repairs; our wagons required to have the tires cut and tightened, but it was too much of a job in the absence of a regular mechanic, so we postponed it until we got to Salt Lake.

"We purchased a small fat beef for \$20, being very much in want of fresh meat now that we were so long out of the buffalo range, and enjoyed the luxury of some regular roast joints, having been given the use of the kitchen. Mr. Bridger, though not forty-five years of age, has had more experience as a mountaineer than any other dweller amongst them, as he not only traded with the Indians at the fort, but taking a pleasure himself in the sport of trapping, was in the habit of leaving his partner as the home manager and spending a great deal of his time in roaming through the fastnesses of the wilderness, by which means he became intimate with every practicable route or locality that could be mentioned.

"He was excessively kind and patient with me in laying down the route to Salt Lake, taking the trouble, for my information and guidance, of drawing a chart with charcoal on the door, of the country through which we were to travel, pointing out a new line that had never yet been attempted which would be a short cut of thirty miles. But as we were traveling by wagons, he did not think it advisable we should run the risk of going over a wholly unbeaten track, though he said it might be safely undertaken with pack mules. He estimated the distance from the South Pass to Fort Bridger, in round numbers, at one hundred and thirty miles, which made it one thousand one hundred and fifty-five from Independence. We left Fort Bridger early in the morning of the third day after our arrival, wonderfully recruited and recovered, and the animals as well, with a fresh stock of pluck and vigor."

The next day, June 17, 1849, William G. Johnston and party arrived at Fort Bridger, Mr. Johnston giving (39) an excellent description of the trading post and its inmates. But it will be of interest first to look back a week on the Johnston party. He writes:

"Sunday, June 10 (1849). Much snow lay along the banks of a number of small streams crossed this morning; in some places it was five and six feet in depth. Our morning halt was made about 7 o'clock, and near to the camp was a temporary trading-post, established within a week past by M. Vasquez, one of the proprietors of Fort Bridger. He was accompanied by a considerable party of trappers, most of whom had with them their Indian wives and children. They occupied lodges made of skins sewed together and stretched over poles about fifteen feet in height, a small opening being left at the top for the escape of smoke, as in all there were fires. There was something weird about the appearance of many of the trappers, the hair of their heads and eyebrows being white from exposure, while their skin resembled parchment in color

and texture. Their women were engaged in making fabrics of buckskin; coats, leggings, moccasins, etc., while their children, all small, fat and hearty, toddled about, excepting some who were being nourished at maternal founts. Most of the trappers were French-Canadians. The same untidiness as to housekeeping and personal toilet was noticeable as that observed at Fort Laramie among the natives.

"Mr. Vasquez was a fine, portly looking gentleman of medium height, about fifty years of age, and made an impression of being intelligent and shrewd. The object of the temporary post was for purposes of trade with emigrants, and the goods on sale consisted of buffalo robes, deer skins, and the buckskin goods in process of making, besides horses and mules, of which a number were on the road from the main trading-post. Our mess traded some bacon and a lot of beads, trinkets, etc., and a mule for a horse which we are to select from the stock approaching, or from that at Fort Bridger, we being furnished with an order to that effect.

"Mr. Hudspeth, of Independence, a noted voyageur of the plains, about the time of our leaving Missouri had waited on Stewart purposely to advise him by all means to follow the trail via Sublette's Cut-off through the mountains leading to Fort Hall after leaving the South Pass. Mr. Vasquez, on the contrary, said that to do so would be a grave mistake, as a desert of considerable extent, destitute of water and fuel, had to be crossed, while the more desirable route was via Fort Bridger and Salt Lake, which was free from such difficulties. Taking paper and pencil, he sketched the two routes, and at the same time piled argument upon argument to persuade Stewart, who seemed greatly perplexed. Hudspeth had spoken of the desert, and of the way to get across it with the least difficulty by carrying water, etc., and especially of the great advantage of the cut-off in shortening the journey. Though having every confidence in Hudspeth, the latter advice prevailed.

"Footnote.—In the sequel it will be seen who was right. We may here add that an object in establishing this temporary post, besides what has been already stated, was to divert the tide of emigration in the direction of Fort Bridger, where further opportunities for trade would be given.—W. G. J.)

" . . . At 3 o'clock we reached the summit of the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains. . . . Along the trail today we noticed boards set up to mark each mile. It is said that the Mormons placed them along the entire route from St. Joseph to Salt Lake, but that emigrant parties had used them for fuel. Distance, twenty-seven miles.

"Monday, June 11th. The water used last evening and again at our noon camp today we brought with us in casks from the

Pacific Spring. We met the drove of animals from Fort Bridger, which Mr. Vasquez had spoken of, and selected a horse from the number, giving Mr. Millet, who was in charge, the order which we held. . . .

"Sunday, June 17th. An hour or so before noon we came to Fort Bridger, situated on Black's Fork, at the foot of the Utah mountains, which loom up grandly above the beautiful fertile valley surrounding this trading-post, one of the most attractive spots thus far seen. Jogging on in advance of the train, by the time the wagons came up I had made an inspection of the fort, besides taking a rest. There are several log buildings, surrounded by a high picket fence, and having a heavy wooden entrance gate. The owners of the fort are Maj. James Bridger, an old mountaineer, who for the past thirty years has been engaged in trading with the Indians about the headwaters of the Missouri and Columbia Rivers, and Colonel Vasquez, whom we met beyond the South Pass, as already related. In company with Mr. Scully, I visited several of the apartments of the fort, among others the rooms occupied by the families of the proprietors, through which we were conducted by Mrs. Vasquez, who entertained us in an agreeable and hospitable manner, notably by inviting us to 'sit upon chairs,' a situation somewhat novel, one to which for some time past we had been unaccustomed.

"Opening upon a court were the rooms occupied by the Bridger family. Mr. Bridger, with a taste differing from that of his partner (who has a white wife from the States), made his selection from among the ladies of the wilderness—a stolid, fleshy, round-headed woman, not oppressed with lines of beauty. Her hair was intensely black and straight, and so cut that it hung in a thick mass upon her broad shoulders. In a corner of Mrs. Bridger's room was a churn filled with buttermilk, and dipping from it with a ladle, Mrs. Vasquez filled and refilled our cups, which we drank until completely satisfied.

"It chanced that we were enabled to repay the kindness shown by this lady without the least sacrifice on our part—a fact to be regretted. In the course of conversation, when speaking of the comforts of which she was deprived by living so far from the haunts of civilization, Mrs. Bridger mentioned the loss of a skillet lid, and her inability thus far to replace it. It was curious that it should be so, but such was the fact that we were the owners of the identical article coveted. Our skillet had been fractured and thrown away, but with that peculiar inclination which many possess of clinging to articles that had become wholly useless, we had treasured that skillet lid, and now in the briefest possible time, even before one could say 'Jack Robinson,' it was transferred to Mrs. Bridger's kitchen. Fifty skillet lids would not have been worth the smile which greeted us when making our presentation speech, and it

was plain that it was altogether useless to attempt to get out of debt. As we turned to leave, a still further burden was placed upon us when we were given a roll of freshly churned butter of a rich golden yellow, and glistening, as it were, with drops of dew.

"In a storeroom of the fort was a considerable stock of buffalo robes, one of which I purchased for the sum of \$5. It was an exceptionally large, fine robe, with long, silky hair, and its equal I have rarely seen. It was, moreover, greatly needed, as I had suffered much from exposure when sleeping on cold and often wet ground. Other storerooms were nearly bare of goods. In one was a keg of whiskey, a jar of tobacco, a box of clay pipes, and but little else. I should mention, however, some large pipes made of red stone called 'St. Peter's Rock,' said to have been brought from the upper Mississippi, and highly esteemed by the Indians. The price at which they are sold, too, \$5, would indicate that they are considered valuable, while Mr. Bridger informed me that there is a very ready sale for them. They are not even bored out, but simply shaped as pipe bowls and thus sold."

The Mrs. Bridger mentioned by this visitor was Bridger's second wife, of the Ute nation. Her enjoyment of her skillet lid was of short duration, for only eighteen days later, July 4, 1849, she passed away at the birth of a baby girl, which was named Virginia. The child lived, and was nourished through infancy on buffalo milk at Fort Bridger; and at the age of five was taken into the family of Bridger's old friend, Robert Campbell, then a St. Louis merchant. At the age of seven, Virginia was placed in a Catholic convent or school at St. Charles.

Bridger's first wife, who was of the Flathead nation, died at Fort Bridger some time during the busy year of 1846, orphaning a two-year old boy named Felix, and a few months old girl baby named Josephine, both of whom were evidently born at Fort Bridger. These children were later placed in the Catholic school at St. Charles, near St. Louis. Father P. J. De Smet [the Catholic priest who was so extensively traveled among the Indians of that day] mentions these children in some correspondence (41).

"St. Louis University, September 27, 1852. Reverend P. J. Verhaegen, S. J., St. Charles: Reverend and Dear Father:—I will thank your Reverence for an immediate answer to the fol-

lowing. Captain Bridger, an old Rocky Mountain friend of mine, has sent his two children (half breeds) to the States to be educated. One is a girl about seven years old; the boy is a little over eight. They have never been baptized, at least I think so, and shall inquire on the subject. He has left means with Col. Robert Campbell for their education and clothing. Inquire of Madame Hamilton whether she will admit the little girl, and at what price? Will Madame Barada admit the boy as a boarder, pay for his schooling at your school, and for how much a year? Please answer without delay. I am afraid the Protestants will try to get them; the sooner they are away from here the better. Pray for me, etc."

The older sister of the two half-breed Flathead children, Mary Ann, was sent by Bridger to the Waiilatpu, Oregon, mission school in August, 1841. This was a Protestant institution, managed by Dr. and Mrs. Marcus Whitman. "Mary Ann Bridger, aged eleven years, residence, Fort Bridger," was still on the roster of the Waiilatpu mission toward the close of the year 1847, at the time of the Cayuse Indian massacre of the inmates of the mission. Mary Ann, with Helen Mar Meek, the half-breed daughter of Joseph L. Meek, were taken captive along with several others. These girls disappeared forthwith, probably in death.

Bridger married the third time, taking a woman from the Snake nation in the summer of 1850, about a year after the death of the second wife. The Snake woman was taken at once to the Missouri farm, where Bridger maintained a home for some years. It is evident, however, that he, and probably she, commuted annually to Fort Bridger. Little Virginia was probably in the care of tribal relatives part or all of this time. A daughter, Mary, was born in 1853, and a son, William, in 1857. Somebody told General Dodge (1) that this Mary dwelt in Indian Territory after her marriage; that William died in 1892; and that Felix became a soldier in the Civil War, and served in certain Indian campaigns afterward.

"He treated his Indian wife as a wife, not as a mistress," says one who claims he knew him (3); "and he was as careful of his half-breed children as any parent on the borders of civilization could be."

Father De Smet mentions Bridger's children subsequently in his letters. "St. Louis University, April 1, 1853. Mr. J. Bridger, Fort Bridger and Vasquez. Dear Friend:—Our good friend Col. R. Campbell acquainted me yesterday that a departure for the mountains was about to take place, and I avail myself of this opportunity of writing a few lines to you. A few days ago I had the pleasure of paying a visit to your children, who reside at present in St. Charles. They appeared to be well pleased, and are certainly well taken care of. Felix frequents our school and is making progress. His sister lives in the academy and under the immediate care of the ladies of that well-conducted establishment, who have every regard for her that good mothers could have for their own children. Both have been somewhat sickly during the winter, but are now doing well. You may rest assured that all shall be done to make them comfortable and happy.

"You have promised me a letter with regard to the Flatheads, and I have anxiously expected it during the whole course of last year. Should you see them, remember me to them, and assure them that I daily address my prayers to the Lord for their welfare and happiness, but to attain this end they must remain faithful to God and not listen to bad counsel and to ill-disposed persons. It would be for me the height of happiness to learn that they still cherish the idea of seeing a Black-gown in their midst, and were this the case, of which I wish to be informed, I would do all I can to see this, their desire, accomplished. I send you by this occasion a couple of pistols and a knife as a present to my dear friend Insula, whose remembrance I shall always cherish. Remember me to all, etc."

The daughter Josephine may have passed away, since nothing is heard of her after her schooling period. Father De Smet indicates in another letter that Bridger was expected to take her and Felix out of the institution at St. Charles in 1854, at least temporarily.

"St. Louis University, March 11, 1854. Reverend Father Verhaegen, S. J. Reverend and Dear Father:—We are all enjoying good health at the university, and Father O'Loughlin has recovered. I spoke to Mr. Campbell the other day about the little Rocky Mountain Felix, and told him that I had written to your Reverence to procure the necessary clothes for the child, for which he thanked me and said it was all right. His father will probably soon arrive in St. Louis, and may again proceed to the mountains, taking his two children along with him. All expenses incurred for Felix up to the day of his departure Mr. Campbell has promised shall be settled, but in the doubt that he may perhaps not be left in

St. Charles, does not like to pay in advance. This much was said to Mrs. Barada, but has not been well understood by her. You may assure her that all is right.

"I hope Mr. Bridger will find his children in good health at his arrival in St. Charles. He has spent upward of thirty years among the Indians and is one of the truest specimens of a real trapper and Rocky Mountain man. He has been always very kind to us, and as he has much influence among the various tribes of the Far West, he may still continue to exercise it in our favor. I hope he will call on your reverence. . . . Remember me, etc."

After Virginia Bridger's entrance at the St. Charles institution, she is next heard from in her marriage to Lieutenant Wachsman. Mr. and Mrs. Wachsman moved to the Bridger farmstead near Kansas City, or Little Santa Fe. She it was who ministered to the broken old scout, her father, in his declining years, the buffalo milk he fed her being repaid in the milk of human kindness, when all other friends had apparently forgotten him.

The following entries are from the St. Charles, Mo., Baptismal Register (97).

JOHN AND ROSALIE BRIDGER.	On the 10th of May, 1854, I baptized John Bridger, about four years old, and Virginia [Rosalie?] Bridger, about six years old, children of Maj. James Bridger and of his Indian wife of the Shoshone or Snake nation in the Rocky Mountains. Godfather, Alexander [Richard] to Louis [John?]; Godmother, Rosalie Richard, his wife.
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P. J. DE SMET, S. J.

FELIX FRANCIS.	On the 6th of January, 1854, I, the undersigned, baptized Felix Francis Bridger, born in December, 1841, son of Captain Bridger of Salt Lake. Godfather, Walter McGavin.
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Js. FR. VAN ASSCHE, S. J.

MARY JOSEPHINE BRIDGER.	On the 21st day of April, 1853, I, the undersigned, baptized Mary Josephine Bridger, a half-breed Indian girl, aged about seven years. Godmother, Olivia Emmerson.
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P. J. VERHAEGEN.

"Elizabeth Bridger was at the Sacred Heart Academy, St. Charles, Mo., Oct. 21, 1852 to Nov. 15, 1853.

"You will notice," writes Miss Stella M. Drumm, librarian (97), "that the first entry seems somewhat involved; for instance, the marginal notation gives the names of John and Rosalie, while the entry itself is John and Virginia. The girl's name was probably Virginia Rosalie, or perhaps, the priest carrying the name of the Godmother in mind, wrote it on the margin. The Godfather 'Alexander to Louis' does not mean anything, unless Alexander Richard was Godfather to John, but Virginia Rosalie would also need a Godfather."

CHAPTER XXXII

BRIDGER PILOTS STANSBURY TO SALT LAKE

THE mountain business at Fort Bridger was confined largely to a few weeks in mid-summer, the activities being almost as intense as those of the trappers' trading rendezvous of former years. The mountain men and the native tribes timed their gathering in the spring with the arrival of the merchandise trains, and with the vanguard of the emigrant hosts, with whom they traded and visited. It thus became necessary to do a year's business in a few weeks, notwithstanding the wide diversity of interests to be served by the Bridger institution.

Louis Vasquez, with the aid of his Mexican wife, usually attended to the trading post business, while Bridger acted as a sort of sales manager to orient the various interests in the direction of Fort Bridger. The herds of horses and work cattle were to be kept adequate in numbers and efficiency, and the merchandise was to be transported annually from the frontier, and the furs were to be returned in their stead. Bridger often engaged his time in the early spring and late autumn months with his trapping interests, which were never allowed fully to lapse while beaver swam; and through diplomatic relations he maintained business connections with the Indians who had valuables to exchange.

Bridger was accustomed to carrying metal arrow points in his flesh, to bearing knife and bullet wounds, and to the general discomforts that attend the life of a frontiersman, yet he nevertheless attracted business by his natural graciousness; there is ample witness to his courtesy and suavity, which never seemed to have left him during these busy days. Such a disposition, backed up with an experience in the wilderness among Indians, and an acquaintance with the very nooks and crannies of the West, such as Bridger possessed, were the requirements for a most efficient guide. Emigrants in all manner

of difficulties appealed to Bridger to aid them, whether their distress was occasioned by poor or crippled livestock, by broken vehicles, the passage of swollen streams or muddy canyons, disorganization of their companies, ignorance of the route, or Indian interferences; while they could get along after a fashion, like the Mormon pioneers, they wanted a conference with Bridger on the way through the mountains.

The first important service Bridger was called upon to render, as guide to travelers off the beaten trail, was for Capt. Howard Stansbury, of the corps of topographical engineers, of the Army. Stansbury engaged the old trapper to pilot him over a new route from Fort Bridger to the Great Salt Lake in 1849, and during the following summer, Bridger led the captain over a new route directly eastward from Fort Bridger into the forks of the Platte River. This last journey formed much of the original survey, through the engineering eyes of this competent mountaineer, of the route of Overland Stage line and the Union Pacific railway.

Captain Stansbury introduces us to Fort Bridger and its interesting proprietor in a brief but potent paragraph (11). "Saturday, August 11 (1849). A drive of thirty-two miles . . . brought us to Fort Bridger, an Indian trading-post. . . . It is built in the usual form of pickets, with the lodging apartments and offices opening into a hollow square, protected from attack from without by a strong gate of timber. On the north, and continuous with the walls, is a strong, high picket fence, inclosing a large yard into which the animals belonging to the establishment are driven for protection from both wild beasts and Indians.

"We were received with great kindness and lavish hospitality by the proprietor, Maj. James Bridger, one of the oldest mountain men in this entire region, who has been engaged in the Indian trade here and upon the heads of the Missouri and Columbia for the last thirty years. Several of my wagons needing repair, the train was detained five days for the purpose, Major Bridger courteously placing his blacksmith shop at my service."

At that time there were two emigrant routes from Fort Bridger to the Humboldt River in Nevada; the old road traversing the Bear and Portneuf Rivers and passing thence southwestward to the Humboldt, and the new route by way of Echo and Weber Canyons and the north end of Great Salt Lake to a junction with the main California road on the Humboldt River below the Point

of Rocks. The one was too far north and the other too far south; and evidently inspired by descriptions of the country given by Bridger, Captain Stansbury sought a more direct route between the two.

"I therefore determined to make the examination myself, accompanied by Major Bridger, and to send forward the train to Salt Lake City by the Mormon road," he informs us. Lieutenant Gunnison was left in charge of the principal party, which was to make a survey of Great Salt Lake upon the arrival of Captain Stansbury and Bridger, who with two assistants were to make the superficial reconnaissance of the new road on the way to Utah.

"The train left accordingly on the 16th. . . . I was myself detained until the 20th by the absence of the partner of Major Bridger, who was on a trip to Salt Lake City, and without whose presence Major Bridger did not deem it prudent to leave the fort." On that day Bridger led the army officer to the crossing of Bear River, and thence to a first camp six miles down the stream at Medicine Butte. "This is a spot well known among the Indians, as that to which they were formerly in the habit of repairing to consult their oracles or 'medicine men,' who had located their 'medicine lodge' in the vicinity of this mountain," Bridger's narrative is paraphrased by Stansbury.

At this encampment "an ox, which had strayed from some unfortunate emigrant, was found upon the bank of the stream in such capital condition that he was shot for food, and such portion as we could not carry with us were most generously presented to a small encampment of Shoshone Indians whose wigwams were erected among the bushes on the opposite side of the stream.

"It was curious to see how perfectly every portion of the animal was secured by them for food, even the paunch and entrails being thoroughly washed for that purpose. The squaws acted as the butchers and displayed familiar acquaintance with the business, while the men lounged about leaning lazily upon their rifles looking listlessly on as if it were a matter in which they were in no manner interested."

Bridger explained to the captain that Bear River bottoms were partially overflowed in the spring, and that snow lies over the valley to a depth of four feet in some winters. This prevented the Indians from occupying the valley except in the summer and autumn seasons, though it tended to make of it a splendid hunting and pasturing encampment.

Crossing the river, Captain Stansbury followed his guide due westward into the foothills and thence into the mountains, on August 22. They soon reached the crest,



Fort Banner as Stansbury found it in 1849-50. Trading post, and residence of James Bridger and Louis Vasquez, his trapping and business partner for some years. Established in 1843.

and the headwaters of Pumber's (Plumber's) Creek, which Bridger at once recognized as a tributary of Weber River. After some investigation from adjacent valleys and ridges to satisfy himself, Stansbury says, "We found it to be as the guide had stated." Following the high country some distance to the northwest, Bridger halted his party at a point where ravines to the right descended into Blacksmith's Fork of Bear River, and ravines to the left drained into Ogden River.

Bridger then explained the lay of the country, pointing out in the hazy distances the outlines of the topography. It was his opinion that the only route between the existing routes for emigrants should lead over the summit to the southwest of Bear Lake, and thence down Blacksmith's Fork and through Bear River canyon. This route was therefore reported on favorably by Captain Stansbury, though he had not then the time necessary to examine it more minutely.

Following an Indian lodge pole trail from Cache valley into Ogden valley, Stansbury then hastened to reach Salt Lake City, to connect with his exploration train. In a comparatively short distance, though over some rather rough country, Bridger led his party out of the hills: "and before us lay a most lovely, broad open valley, somewhat in the shape of a crescent, about fifteen miles long and from five to seven miles in width, hemmed in on all sides, especially at the south and west, by lofty hills and rocky mountains."

This was Ogden valley, in which the town of Huntsville is now situated, and which was known to the trappers as Ogden's Hole, just as the Teton valley was Pierre's Hole, Jackson's valley was Jackson's Hole, and Brown's Park was Brown's Hole to them. "The valley of Ogden's Creek, or Ogden's Hole, as places of this kind in the nomenclature of the country are called, has long been the rendezvous of the Northwest Company, on account of its fine range for stock in the winter," Bridger tells us through the captain's pen; "and it has been the scene of many a merry reunion of the hardy trappers and traders of the mountains. Its streams were formerly full of

beaver, but these have, I believe, entirely disappeared." It is evident that Bridger was telling Stansbury of a period subsequent to the wintering of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company immediately on the other side of the Wasatch mountains, at the Salt Lake rendezvous.

An interesting episode is related which occurred while the party was riding through Ogden valley. "We came suddenly upon a party of eight or ten Indian women and girls, each with a basket on her back, gathering seeds for their winter's provisions. They were of the class of 'root diggers,' or as the guide called them, 'snake diggers.' The instant they discovered us, an immediate and precipitate flight took place, nor could all the remonstrance of the guide, who called loudly after them in their own language, induce them to halt for a single moment.

"Those who were too close to escape by running hid themselves in the bushes and grass so effectually, that in less time than it has taken to narrate the circumstance, only two of them were to be seen. These were a couple of girls of twelve or thirteen years of age, who, with their baskets dangling at their backs, set off at their utmost speed for the mountains, and continued to run as long as we could see them, without stopping or so much as turning their heads to look behind them. The whole party was entirely naked. After they had disappeared, we came near riding over two girls of sixteen or seventeen who had 'cached' behind a fallen tree. They started up, gazed upon us for a moment, waved us to continue our journey, and then fled with a rapidity that soon carried them beyond our sight."

Captain Stansbury observed the entrance to Ogden canyon, listened to Bridger's description of the route, and then entered in his notes that it was "wild and almost impassable." Neither Stansbury nor Bridger evidently envisioned the scores of summer homes that now nestle in the cool cradle of this magnificent gorge, and the paved highway and the electric railway which enable the successors to the trappers to pass from Ogden's Hole to the Salt Lake valley in a few minutes at the present time.

Bridger used the trapper caravan route out of Ogden

valley, with Captain Stansbury, which is now covered by a secondary roadway from the village of Eden, to the suburb of North Ogden. While pausing in the westerly portal of this pass, Bridger pointed out to his distinguished visitor the Great Salt Lake and its general features, much to the delight of the captain. During that evening another event occurred which may be worth entry herein. "In two or three miles we came to what was called Brown's Settlement, and rode up to quite an assemblage of log buildings, picketed, stockaded, and surrounded by out-buildings and cattle yards, the whole affording evidence of comfort and abundance, far greater than I had expected to see in so new a settlement."

This was the Miles Goodyear ranchstead, comprising the land between Great Salt Lake and the Wasatch mountains, and extending about eight miles north and south, at the city of Ogden. Goodyear had obtained the land on a Spanish grant about 1841, but with the settlement of the Salt Lake valley by the Mormons he had consented to sell it to Capt. James Brown, of the Mormon Battalion, who had served under Col. P. St. George Cook in 1847, on the Mexican boundary and in southern California, and who had come to Utah in 1848. The place was occupied by his own and his relatives' families.

"Upon requesting food and lodging for the night, we were told to our great surprise that we could not be accommodated, nor would the occupant sell us so much as an egg or a cup of milk, so that we were obliged to remount our horses; and we actually bivouacked under some willows within a hundred yards of this inhospitable dwelling, turning our animals loose and guarding them all night, lest in search of food they should damage the crops of this surly Nabal. From a neighboring plantation we procured what we needed; otherwise we should have been obliged to go supperless to bed.

"I afterward learned that the proprietor had been a sort of commissary or quartermaster in Colonel Cooke's Mormon battalion in California and had some reason to expect and to dread a visit from the civil officers of the United States on account of certain unsettled public ac-

counts; and that he had actually mistaken us for some such functionaries. Subsequent acts of a similar nature, however, fully evinced the ungracious character of the man, strongly contrasted as it was with the frank and generous hospitality we ever received at the hands of the whole Mormon community."

Departing from the emigrant road out of Weber canyon at this point, Bridger led the captain over the sandhills and along the foothills to the southward; skirting the waters of Great Salt Lake, where that body presses its waters against the mountains, a region still very familiar to Bridger as an Indian fighting ground, they found the Gunnison detachment encamped at the Warm Springs north of the Salt Lake City limits. After a little minor business with the saints in Salt Lake City, Bridger took his leave of the captain and returned to Fort Bridger.

During the early summer of 1850, Bridger served as guide for an exploring party into the Yellowstone country, though the details of the journey are meager. The party included Kit Carson, trappers Lou Anderson, Soos, and about twenty others, who arrived from St. Louis late in 1849 and wintered near Fort Bridger with the Bannock Indians. Crossing the divide between the Green and Snake rivers after leaving Fort Bridger, the party traversed Jackson Hole and journeyed thence to Lake Yellowstone, passing down the Yellowstone River to the falls and canyon of that stream. They then crossed over westward to the Madison River, and subsequently journeyed upstream and into the lower geyser basins, or Fire Holes, as they called them, going by way of the stream called by them for the first time, the Fire Hole River. Bridger was back at Fort Bridger early in the autumn. Topping (90) says the report of these travelers made quite a stir in St. Louis.

CHAPTER XXXIII

EXPLORING THE OVERLAND ROUTE

WRITHING ox teams and straining mules, drawing the creaking emigrant wagons, wormed their laborious way up the Platte and the Sweetwater, and thence through the South Pass and across the desert plains of the Sandy to Fort Bridger, with never a prospect for an easier and a better way; and indeed, for them no better or easier way was ever found! But Capt. Howard Stansbury, being a man of vision, had inquired of his trapper-topographer friend, James Bridger, about the feasibility of a more direct route.

Bridger described the general lay of the land, and assured the trail-blazing captain that such a route seemed practicable; it would trend directly eastward from Fort Bridger, crossing Green River and ascending the valley of the Bitter Creek, thence crossing the north fork of the Platte near the Medicine Bow mountain, and the Laramie River in Laramie plains. It would cross the Sherman Hill country, of the southern part of the Black Hills, and probably descend Lodge Pole Creek to its junction with the south Platte.

The route thus approximately traced by Bridger was the route over which he led Captain Stansbury in September, 1850; and it was the general route of the Overland Stage, Pony Express, and the Union Pacific railroad in later years. Arriving at Fort Bridger on September 5, Captain Stansbury speaks of the proprietors, Bridger and Vasquez, very kindly, "from both of whom we received the kindest attention, and every assistance which it was in their power to render." The party remained at Fort Bridger several days perfecting arrangements for the exploration trip, which was through a region where hostile Indians congregated and fought frequently.

"Major Bridger, although at a considerable sacrifice of his own interest, with great spirit, offered his services

as guide, he being well acquainted with the ground over which it was my desire to pass. The offer was most cheerfully accepted." The party moved down Black's Fork on September 10, encamping on the stream that night. "A merchant train for Salt Lake passed us during the day from which I procured some sugar and coffee, of which articles we were nearly destitute, the supply of Salt Lake City having been exhausted long before our departure."

Leaving the emigrant trail near Church Butte, below the mouth of Ham's Fork, Bridger led his party directly toward Pilot Butte, a prominent elevation near the present site of Green River city, and about forty miles distant. Descending Rabbit Hollow, the party crossed Green River, and passed into Bitter Creek basin, along the stream of that name.

Just before crossing the Green, on the morning of the 13th they were surprised by a war party of Shoshones dashing upon them. This party had mistaken the explorers for a body of Ute Indians, enemies of the Shoshones. But Bridger and Stansbury interviewed the warriors and sent them on their way without a fight. The red men were armed with rifles, bows and arrows, and a few had old bayonets attached to the ends of long poles.

A bed of bituminous coal was found outcropping about thirteen miles from the mouth of Bitter Creek, whereupon Bridger stated that a similar outcropping occurred about a mile below the mouth of Bitter Creek, and another just south of the mouth of Black's Fork. He claimed he had used coal from the latter at Fort Bridger for several years, with excellent success.

Bridger explained to Stansbury that the valley of Bitter Creek usually carried but little snow through the winter, thus it was a favorite rendezvous for the trappers and traders in the earlier days, due in part to the abundance of buffalo for meat. It is quite probable that Bridger himself wintered there at different times. The explorers passed over the Bitter Creek-Little Snake River divide on September 17.

Descending Bridger's Fork, the party encamped on the Muddy Fork, September 18th. "We are now upon the war ground of

several hostile tribes, who make this region the field of mutual encounter and increased vigilance is constantly necessary to guard against a surprise, an occurrence which as one of its least unpleasant consequences might leave us on foot in the midst of the wilderness," Bridger tells us, in the words of Captain Stansbury; "all firing of guns without express permission, except in case of the most urgent necessity, has been strictly forbidden, and every man slept with his arms by his side.

"As we were reposing our weary limbs before the campfire, regaling ourselves with a pipe, now our only luxury, Major Bridger entertained us with one of those trappers' legends which abound as much among these adventurous men as the 'yarns' so long famous among their counterpart, the sailors, on a rival element. A partner of his, Mr. Henry Frappe (Fraeb), had a party of what, in the language of the country, are called 'free men,' that is, independent traders, who some nine years before were encamped about two miles from where we then were, with their squaw partners and a party of Indians. Most of the men being absent hunting buffalo, a band of five hundred Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes suddenly charged upon their camp, killed a white man, an Indian and two women, drove off a hundred and sixty head of cattle, and chasing the hunters killed several of them in their flight, the residue escaping only by abandoning their horses and hiding in the bushes.

"Intelligence of this onslaught reached Major Bridger, then occupied in erecting a trading post on Green River; he sent Frappe advice to abandon his post at once for fear of worse consequences. The advice, however, was neglected; when about ten days after, as his party was on their way to join his partner, they were again suddenly attacked by another large party of the savage allies. He had but forty men, but they instantly 'forted' in the corral attached to the trading post, and stood on their defense. The assault lasted from noon until sundown, the Indians charging the pickets several times with great bravery, but they were finally repulsed with the loss of forty men. Frappe himself was killed with seven or eight of his people. I give this as a sample of the perilous adventures in which these rude and daring men, almost as wild as their savage foes, were engaged as things of course, and which they related around their campfires with a relish quite professional. (See chapter 27.)

"September 19 (1850). . . . Before noon we passed a spot where a party of fourteen fur traders under M. Vasquez had 'forted' and fought forty Ogallalah Sioux for four hours, successfully defending themselves and repulsing the Indians. One of our men, a half-breed hunter, had himself been in the fight, and pointed out to me the localities with the most minute particularity of bloody detail."

Ascending the Muddy some distance they reached the dividing

height between the waters of the Pacific and those of the Atlantic, at what has since been called Bridger's Pass.²¹ Descending and crossing Sage Creek the party finally encamped on the left bank of the North Fork of the Platte, "in a lovely bottom, amid picturesque groves and clumps of gigantic cottonwoods." This was not far from the present town of Saratoga, Wyoming.

"The place we now occupy has long been a favorite camp ground for the numerous war parties which annually meet in this region to hunt buffalo and one another. Remains of old Indian stockades are met with scattered about among the thickets; and the guide informed us that four years since there were at one and the same time upon this one bottom fifteen or twenty of these forts constructed by different tribes. Most of them have since been destroyed by fire. As this was the season of the year when we might expect to find them upon their expeditions, we were on the *qui vive*, lest we should be surprised. Arms were inspected and put in order and a vigilant guard kept during the night."

They moved upstream a short distance and then crossed on a pebbly bottom. "A large portion of the way from camp was through a natural park of noble cottonwood trees sixty feet high and two and three feet in diameter, and over a rich level bottom covered with a luxuriant growth of grass. Major Bridger informs me that for twenty miles above the river presents the same beautiful appearance, every little bottom formed by the winding of the stream being covered by a growth similar to that through which we had just passed.

"Immediately above where we crossed were about twenty Indian forts or lodges constructed of logs set up endwise, somewhat in the form of an ordinary skin lodge, which had been erected among the timber by different war parties; they appeared to be very strong and were ball-proof." The party here turned northward to pass around Medicine Bow mountain.

"Tuesday, September 24th. . . . Early in the morning a large herd of buffalo was seen quietly feeding on the side of a hill about a mile to the southward. Archambault was soon in the saddle, and approaching through a ravine which concealed him from their sight, he reached the top of the hill immediately above them undiscovered. The whole herd was in full view of the camp, then busily engaged in packing the mules for the day's march. Soon the crack of a rifle and the sudden fall of one of the dark objects on the hillside gave notice that the work of destruction had commenced.

21. Bridger's Pass over the continental divide became an important station on the overland stage line, after the route was transferred from the Sweetwater River to the Laramie Plains about 1862, and remained so until the abandonment of the route in 1868, with the passing of the railroad a few miles to the north. The Pass is about twenty miles southwest of Rawlins, Wyoming.

"Keeping himself concealed behind a large rock, the hunter very leisurely shot down four of these monsters, although one was much more than we could carry with us. When satisfied with his morning's success, he showed himself from behind his breastwork, the whole band scurried off as fast as they could 'tumble ahead.' I rode up to the scene of this wanton butchering and for the first time witnessed the operation of cutting up a buffalo. This is called butchering 'mountain fashion,' and a most barbarous fashion it is.

"Contrary to the custom among us, the skinning process commences by making an incision along the top of the backbone and separating the hide downward, so as to get the more quickly at what are considered the choice parts of the animal. These are the 'bass,' a hump projecting from the back of the neck just before the shoulders, and which is generally removed with the skin attached; it is about the size of a man's head and when boiled resembles marrow, being exceedingly tender, rich and nutritious. Next comes the hump and the hump ribs, projections of the vertebrae just behind the shoulders, some of which are a foot in length. These are generally broken off by a mallet made of the lower joint of one of the forelegs cut off for the purpose. After these come the 'fleece,' the portion of the flesh covering the ribs; the 'depuis,' a broad fat part extending from the shoulders to the tail; the 'belly-fleece'; some of the ribs called 'side ribs' to distinguish them from the hump ribs; the thigh or marrow bones, and the tongue. Generally the animal is opened and the tenderloin and tallow secured. All the rest, including the hams and shoulders, indeed by far the greater portion of the animal, is left on the ground.

"It is in vain to remonstrate against this wholesale destruction. . . . All intercession in favor of the poor buffalo is looked upon by these old mountain men with a strange mixture of wonder and contempt," Passing over onto the Medicine Bow River, the party moved thence to the east fork and to Frappe's Creek (Fraeb's), the last named creek being "so called from the fact that Mr. Frappe having been some years since robbed at the mouth of this stream of a band of sixty horses by a party of Aricarrees." Crossing Laramie plains and Laramie River, Stansbury pitched camp in a clump of cottonwoods on the river bank, suspicious of numerous Indians in the vicinity.

"In the meantime Indian scouts made their appearance on the surrounding hills reconnoitering us, and seemed to be as uncertain of our character and intentions as we were of theirs. . . . Finding the Indians only hovered around at a distance, Major Bridger, shouldering his rifle, walked out toward them and made various signs to an advance party that came out to meet him; when finding that we were white men, and not a hostile band of Indians as they had supposed, they commenced a perfect race for our camp, and in

a few minutes a stream of Indians galloped up holding out their hands to shake with any and everybody they met. They proved to be a large band of Ogallalabs (one of the numerous bands of Sioux), . . . having mistaken us for a war party of Crows. . . .

"Among the Sioux was one solitary, dignified old Cheyenne chief, who figured in the undress frock of a major of artillery, buttoned closely up to his throat, and of which he seemed not a little vain. To my surprise I found that he did not understand the Sioux tongue at all, and communicated with those of that tribe wholly by signs. The Sioux chief with the unpronounceable name, the translation of which has already been given ["who rejoiced in the very original title of 'Buffalo Dung'"], was a noble looking old man, and very much disposed to be sociable. He explained to me that he was greatly afflicted with sore eyes, and begged for something to cure them. I had nothing but an old pair of goggles with very dark green glasses, which I gave him and with which he was very much delighted, mounting them with great complacency, although it was then very nearly dark. With a spy-glass also they were very much pleased, and through it watched the erection of their lodges with great wonder and interest. A Colt's revolver, when explained to them, excited many remarks, and evidently increased their respect for the strength of our little party.

"There was one circumstance, however, that attracted my attention in this interview with these untutored sons of the forest more than any other; and that was the perfection and precision to which they appear to have reduced a system of purely arbitrary and conventional signs, by which all over this vast region intercourse, though of a limited character, may be held between tribes who are perfect strangers to each other's tongue. After partaking of such food as could be hastily prepared for them, the principal men seated themselves on the ground in a circle around the campfire in front of the tent, and the pipe of peace was filled and duly circulated in regular succession.

"Our esteemed friend and experienced mountaineer, Major Bridger, who was personally known to many of our visitors, and to all of them by the repute of his numerous exploits, was seated among us. Although intimately acquainted with the languages of the Crows, Blackfeet, and most of the tribes west and northwest of the Rocky Mountain chain, he was unable to speak to either the Sioux or Cheyennes in their own tongue, or that of any tribe which they could understand.

"Notwithstanding this he held the whole circle for more than an hour perfectly enchained and evidently most deeply interested in a conversation and narrative, the whole of which was carried on without the utterance of a single word. The simultaneous exclamations of surprise or interest, and the occasional bursts of hearty laughter, showed that the whole party perfectly understood

not only the theme, but the minutiae of the pantomime exhibited before them. I looked on with close attention, but the signs to me were for the most part altogether unintelligible. Upon after inquiry I found that this language of signs is universally understood by all the tribes."

Guiding his party over the Black Hills, Bridger led them on an exploring journey over the Lodgepole, Horse and Chugwater Creeks, discharging them at Fort Laramie on their way back to the settlements. Bridger returned to Fort Bridger, it is believed, where he took unto himself his third wife and followed Stansbury down the river to the mouth of the Kaw River, where at Little Santa Fe he had purchased a farm as previously stated.

CHAPTER XXXIV

BRIDGER DESCRIBES YELLOWSTONE PARK

JAMES BRIDGER'S fame as a skilled guide and frontiersman, and as a gracious and entertaining companion, was carried again to the lower Missouri River points in the autumn of 1850 by Capt. Howard Stansbury and his party. Thus when Bridger arrived from the mountains a few weeks later he was accorded a somewhat warmer welcome than usual. Being rather taciturn, except when approached, or when attending to business, he had merely been one more long-haired, leather-clothed mountaineer and trapper among the many theretofore, but his kind was diminishing.

Lieut. J. W. Gunnison, of Stanbury's party, had told his friends and interviewers what he later told his readers (42) that Bridger was the leading man then in the mountains; his influence with the Indians was greater than any other man's sway; and his capabilities as a guide were unsurpassed. Speaking of Bridger's unusual activity in personally scaling every ridge and exploring every ravine and waterway of importance in the West, Gunnison pays a high tribute to his geographical knowledge.

Bridger had at that time "traversed the region from the headwaters of the Missouri to the (Rio Grande) Del Norte, and along the Gila to the Gulf, and thence throughout Oregon and the interior California." It is to be regretted that we cannot follow him. He is claimed to have made many such journeys alone, or with but one or two companions, often Indians, because his pace was much too rapid and his endurance too great for the average person.

"His graphic sketches are delightful romances." Gunnison grows enthusiastic. "With a buffalo skin and a piece of charcoal," as if the scene were a campfire in the mountains, "he will map out any portion of this immense

region, and delineate mountains, streams, and the circular valleys called 'holes,' with wonderful accuracy; at least we may so speak of that portion we traversed after his descriptions were given."

Bridger had discovered and explored much of the prehistoric land of the cliff dwellers in the Southwest, and he described these ruins to Lieutenant Gunnison. Vaguely locating them west of the Del Norte and north of the Gila, Gunnison did not interest himself so much in the precise location as in their character. The ruins in question were most probably those of the Mesa Verde and neighboring areas, since Bridger was a trapper, on trapping expeditions, and these are nearest and most accessible to some of the beaver streams. There are, however, many ruins nearer the Gila and the Del Norte, as he calls it.

"There are gigantic ruins of masonry which he describes with the clearness of a Stephens," Gunnison declares. "Trees have grown over these destroyed towns, and fruits and nuts load their branches; and among the animals are the wild boar and grizzly bear. His own words are: 'This fertile place is large enough for three states, and is the most delightful spot that ever God made for man.'"

The story of Colter's Hell had been told and retold for thirty-five years with little variation; but in 1827 a newspaper had published a story describing a visit to a part of the park, which added some zest to the Colter inferno. Then in 1833, a Mormon newspaper had published another description of some of the park features, and still another came to light in 1842; but all these descriptions were antiquated, and the stories losing caste.

Gunnison's arrival at the settlements was calculated to reawaken interest in the park, for he had a first hand description of the park phenomena by Bridger, who had visited the park many times from many directions as a trapper. Bridger was therefore interviewed by a newspaper man on the lower Missouri, and a general description of the geysers, hot water phenomena, and the canyons was given.

It was a good story, and after setting it in type the publisher confided the news to a friend, who unfortunately cautioned against a too great confidence in the tale of a mere trapper. The cold water thus poured broke the faith of the writer, and the story was discarded. What a narrow miss from becoming the first to record Bridger's story! That same editor published many stories of the park in later years and in 1879, when Bridger was decrepit, and very near his demise, a story was run which followed Bridger's description, taken from other sources, together with an explanation and an apology to the old scout.

Thus the material which Gunnison gathered for his book in 1849 and 1850, and printed in 1852, included Bridger's description of the park features, which according to Chittenden (43) was the most specific and detailed of the early references to them. Bridger's word picture of the region about the headwaters of the Yellowstone River were, according to Gunnison, "most romantic and enticing."

"A lake sixty miles long, cold and pellucid, lies embosomed amid high and precipitous mountains. On the west side is a sloping plain several miles wide, with clumps of trees and groves of pine. The ground resounds to the tread of horses. Geysers spout up seventy feet high, with a terrific hissing noise, at regular intervals. Waterfalls are sparkling, leaping and thundering down the precipices, and collect in the pool below. The river issues from this lake, and for fifteen miles roars through the perpendicular canyon at the outlet. In this section are the Great Springs, so hot that meat is readily cooked in them, and as they descend on the successive terraces, afford at length delightful baths. On the other side is an acid spring, which gushes out in a river torrent; and below is a cave which supplies 'vermilion' for the savages in abundance. Bear, elk, deer, wolf, and fox are among the sporting game, and the feathered tribe yields its share for variety, on the sportsman's table of rock or turf."

The reopening of the subject of the Yellowstone wonders at this time evidently caused Father De Smet, the

Indian missionary, to take a keen interest, and on a journey from Fort Union at the mouth of the Yellowstone River to Fort Laramie, across country, during the summer of 1851, he gathered further information about Colter's Hell, and another region of greater wonders near by, as he thought it to be. He credits his information indefinitely to trappers generally, though in closing a letter dated January 20, 1852, in which his descriptions are given, he says: "I have this report from Captain Bridger, who is familiar with every one of these mounds, having passed thirty years of his life near them."

Bridger gave the locations so precisely, probably with reference to known mountain peaks, and streams, that Father De Smet allocated the park correctly for the first time (43). "Near the source of the River Puante (Shoshone) which empties into the Big Horn, and the sulphurous waters of which have probably the same medicinal qualities as the celebrated Blue Lick Springs of Kentucky, is a place called Colter's Hell, from a beaver hunter of that name.

"This locality is often agitated with subterranean fires. The sulphurous gases which escape in great volumes from the burning soil infect the atmosphere for several miles, and render the earth so barren that even the wild wormwood cannot grow on it. The beaver hunters have assured me that the underground noises and explosions are often frightful.

"However, I think that the most extraordinary spot in this respect, and perhaps the most marvelous of all the northern half of this continent, is in the very heart of the Rocky Mountains, between the forty-third and forty-fifth degrees of latitude, and the one hundred and ninth and one hundred and eleventh degrees of longitude; that is, between the sources of the Madison and the Yellowstone. It reaches more than a hundred miles." Father De Smet's opinion, just expressed, was evidently that of James Bridger, or possibly a composite of several narrators, since the much traveled priest had not then seen the region he was describing. He continues:

"Bituminous, sulphurous, and boiling springs are very

numerous in it. The hot springs contain a large quantity of calcareous matter, and form hills more or less elevated, which resemble in their nature, perhaps, if not in their extent, the famous springs of Pemboukkalesi, in Asia Minor, so well described by Chandler. The earth is thrown up very high, and the influence of the elements causes it to take the most varied and the most fantastic shapes.

"Gas, vapor and smoke are continually escaping by a thousand openings from the base to the summit of the volcanic pile; the noise at times resembles the steam let off by a boat. Strong, subterranean explosions occur like those in Colter's Hell. The hunters and the Indians speak of it with a superstitious fear, and consider it the abode of evil spirits, that is to say, a kind of hell. Indians seldom approach it without offering some sacrifice, or at least without presenting the calumet of peace to the turbulent spirits, that they may be propitious. They declare that the subterranean noises proceed from the forging of warlike weapons; each eruption of the earth is, in their eyes, the result of a combat between the infernal spirits, and becomes the monument of a new victory or calamity. Near Gardiner River, a tributary of the Yellowstone, and in the vicinity of the region I have just been describing, there is a mountain of sulphur."

Bridger had, of course, visited and described Obsidian Cliff, the black hillock of volcanic glass, and had undoubtedly directed many Indians to it, from whence they obtained thousands of arrowheads. His discovery of the warm spring water in the bottom of Fire Hole River led him to the honest belief that as one would rub two sticks together and generate heat from the friction, so did the stream, flowing rapidly over a solid rock bottom create heat and warm the water at the bottom. Though his reasoning was at fault, his facts were not. The story traveled far and wide, and created many a laugh; but Bridger's over-celebrated yarns of the Yellowstone, like the other fabrications retailed by him to greedy tourists, were of a far later and less serious period in his activities.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE MORMONS AND THE INDIANS

"IT was believed by Brigham Young that James Bridger and other mountaineers were at the bottom of much of the ill-feeling manifested by the red men, and that they were incited to attack the Mormon settlements."—That sentence is from a history of Utah (45) and has been so often referred to that it has been taken as the text for this chapter. Other mountaineers, however, are usually unnamed; and Louis Vasquez, Bridger's business associate, is given a clean bill from the Mormons. He had established a branch store in Salt Lake City and his actions were under closer scrutiny.

"Vasquez and Bridger wrote to Brigham on the 17th of April, 1849 (10) that the Utes were badly disposed toward Americans, and that Chiefs Elk and Walker were urging the Utes to attack the settlements in Utah valley. The brethren were advised to protect themselves, but if the Indians were friendly, to teach them to raise grain and 'order them to quit stealing.' Brigham was persuaded that Bridger was his enemy, and expressed the conviction that he and the other mountaineers were responsible for all the Indian trouble, and that he was watching every movement of the Mormons and reporting to Thomas H. Benton at Washington. (Foot note: 'I believe that Old Bridger is death on us, and if he knew that four hundred thousand Indians were coming against us and any man were to let us know, he would cut his throat. . . . His letter is all bubble and froth. . . . Vasquez is a different sort of man.' Hist of B. Young, MS. 1849, 77.)"

The Mormons waved the magic wand of faith, and the equally potent staff of hard work, over the Salt Lake valley, making it bud, though with but a faint promise at first of blossoming as the rose. A short crop due to a late arrival was secured in 1847; and with a cricket devasta-

tion in 1848, the actual blossoming of the valley was long deferred, much to the despair of the settlers. Thus if their faith had not been deeply rooted, discouragement would have completed the ravaging of the colony long before the increase from the fields became a reality.

Impoverished as they were, the settlers, however, were bait for the thieving Utes ere many months had passed. It happened in the beginning, that the Indians had no particularly strong ties of affection for the ground first occupied by the Mormons, and the whites were left in comparative peace until early in 1849. But the spreading of the settlers into adjacent valleys, exposing small companies, and making rival claims to lands long utilized by the Indians, was the signal for retaliation.

The most northerly and westerly tribes of the Ute Indian nation were established in the neighborhood of Utah Lake, about forty miles south of the first Mormon settlement in Utah; and the red men looked with some misgivings upon the coming of a permanent body of whites into their general territory. One report states that War Chief Walker (Walkara) sought permission to repel the Saints in the very beginning, but the wiser counsel of Principal War Chief Sowiette prevailed (91).

The Indian grapevine of gossip usually had a terminal wherever Jim Bridger happened to be; and he promptly apprised the Mormon leaders of Chief Walker's intentions, Vasquez corroborating the fact (44). But for his trouble in carrying bad news, Bridger was himself suspected of abetting the Indians, so the claims were made in later years. His pretended friendship, and his twenty-five years' experience with Indians, were for some reason spurned by the Mormons, though their need for a capable and trustworthy intermediary at the time was very great.

Trouble began with the Indians in February, 1849, when a troop of pirates from the Timpanogos camp of Utes levied a sort of land rental fee on the Mormons in the sum of fifteen head of cattle, and a few riding horses, taken from Draper, an isolated ward near Salt Lake City. A group of determined settlers was soon in pursuit, engaging two lodges of Utes at Battle Creek (Pleasant

Grove). Four or five warriors were killed, and the thirteen women and children were taken to Salt Lake City for later release.

A few weeks later, about thirty Mormon families moved toward the mouth of the Provo River to begin the spring farming. They had tentatively selected as a site for their settlement, a favorite gathering ground of the Utes, where an annual fish festival was held as the fish ascended the stream at spawning time. A formidable Indian opposition gathered, and much persuasion was exerted before the whites were allowed, even temporarily, to enter upon the land. This permission was gained in the end by a solemn and formal agreement allowing the Indians to retain full possession of their lands (91).

But the manner in which the settlers began to establish themselves, laying out the fields, clearing the ground, and erecting a formidable looking fortress or hollow square of log houses, aroused the suspicion of the Indians, and Chief Walker's ire was raised to a fighting heat. Red men in war paint came galloping out of the Wasatch mountain defiles and arrayed themselves with their pugnacious leader and proceeded to rip the fabric of friendship asunder.

The settlers never ventured from their fortified sanctuary except in well armed groups, and tantalizing snipings and thievings by the Indians not only made farming difficult, but kept war imminent. About August 1, 1849, three settlers came upon Old Bishop, a lone Indian, and accused him of purloining and wearing a shirt belonging to one of the men. On his refusal to surrender the garment, they attempted to take it by force; and in the ensuing fight Old Bishop was killed (44).

The body was weighted in a stream, but Bishop's tribesmen discovered it and furiously demanded the surrender of the slayers. When this request was ignored, they compromised in their own minds for a band of horses, but this request was also disregarded. The tension became greater, and a real fight was averted only by the arrival of a large and well armed California emigrant party who wished to recuperate their stock on the Utah Lake bot-

toms. But when the emigrants proceeded on their way in a few weeks, only an epidemic of measles, spreading from the Mormons to the Indians, caused the latter to disperse for a season.

Capt. Howard Stansbury and party, who had been engaged in surveying Great Salt Lake and Utah Lake, settled at Fort Utah (Provo) for the winter of 1849-1850, his presence being a great comfort to the settlers. But the Indians kept up their annoyances, and the Mormon militia kept up its training. Toward spring Brigham Young was encouraged by Captain Stansbury to dispatch the militia after the Indians. The result was a long series of battles and sieges over the Utah valley generally, in which a cannon belching chain-shot was employed, the Ute warriors being almost annihilated (44). A few braves in war paint escaped by flight; but many children and women were taken captive, and held for some time at Salt Lake City.

Chief Big Elk, a sub-chief or an associate chief, to War Chief Walker, was killed at this time by William A. Hickman, a Mormon militiaman, according to Hickman (46), who decapitated the Indian. "I took off his head, for I had heard the old mountaineer, Jim Bridger, say he would give a hundred dollars for it." This would seem to indicate that the Utes lacked Bridger's support, and that the militiamen had no thought of attributing the war to him. Hickman also says the militia took women and children prisoners, "and distributed them among the people"; and others refer to purchases and adoptions of Indian children during these times, a practice which, though humanitarian, may not have furthered the interests of peace between the Indians and the settlers.

In the summer of 1850 it was claimed that Chief Walker sought to enlist the Mormons' aid against the Shoshones; but on being refused Walker became enraged, and his principal chief, Sowiette, narrowly averted a general war on the Saints. About that time thieving became intolerable among the Goshute Indians in Skull valley, southwest of Great Salt Lake. The militia was sent against the marauders, who, according to Gottfredson (44)

were taken by surprise in a camp and nearly all of the males were killed.

Again in the spring of 1851, a band of Indians, suspected of murder, was captured at a point just south of Great Salt Lake by the white men, and immediately dispatched. The year 1852 was a sort of lull in Indian troubles, before the big storm of the Walker War of 1853. The uprising of 1853 was quite formidable, but instead of blaming Bridger for inciting it, Mexican slave traders, trafficking in Indian slaves, were charged with being the power behind Chief Walker.

Most characterizations of Walker make him abundantly able to incite riot alone, without outside aid; but it appears that the Walker War of 1853 came about in a very logical way, as Indian wars usually came. On July 17, 1853, a squaw traded a quantity of fish for a quantity of flour with a white woman near Fort Utah. The squaw's husband arriving on the scene severely chastized her for making such a bad trade; whereupon the husband of the white woman grappled with the Indian, breaking a gun apart, and finally killing the Indian with the iron gun barrel.

Forces began a general mobilization on both sides; but before the militia could get under headway, a white man was killed near Payson, in the south end of Utah county. Then came the summer's war, which dragged a bloody trail through the valleys for many miles to the south, and endured for many anxious weeks. A goodly number of Indians were killed, and casualties were rather numerous among the whites, there being a few deaths. But probably the worst tragedy of the war, if it may be connected with the Walker War, was the killing of Capt. J. W. Gunnison, and his entire party, who were on a surveying expedition near Sevier Lake.

There were other conflicts between the Mormons and the Indians in subsequent years, but none in which Bridger is alleged to have had an interested hand. Bridger was on the best of terms with Captain Stansbury and Lieutenant (later captain) Gunnison; and he was in the better graces of both the Ute and Shoshone tribal leaders, none

of whom were active against the Saints. There is, indeed, no specific evidence now available to connect Bridger with any of the Indian uprisings; and the original suspicion that he incited the Indians against the Mormons because he did not want them to settle in the Salt Lake valley, may have been as groundless as the old and wornout charge that the Mormons incited the Indians against Captain Gunnison, because he wrote a history of the Mormons.

CHAPTER XXXVI

GARRISON URGED FOR FORT BRIDGER

A PROBLEM with a few ticklish phases presented itself in the matter of accepting the responsibility and defraying the expenses of fighting, subduing and governing the Indians in Utah and Wyoming. The Mormons had settled originally in Mexican territory, temporarily out of reach of Missouri persecutors and prosecutors; but the Mexican War settlement threw them and the Salt Lake valley back into the fold of the United States and territories.

Then trouble of another sort was visited upon the already overburdened Saints, in the form of territorial officers out of sympathy with them. The man-power of the Mormons was small enough, for starting a commonwealth from the very soil, and to have to exercise this power for the unproductive work of Indian fighting was a downright hardship. Yet to call for United States troops to quell the Indians, with territorial officers making ugly threats upon the Saints, seemed like inviting the privilege of looking into the muzzle of a loaded gun.

When Captain Stansbury and party arrived in Utah late in the summer of 1849, he found the Mormons not a little perturbed at his presence and his probable errand. He was an army officer, and his movements had been watched from the day he left the frontier settlements on the Missouri River. The Mormon consternation was not appreciably lessened, though diverted, on learning that the captain had been directed to make certain surveys; they thought he was to survey the land and claim titles, and make charges, for all areas occupied by the settlers. Stansbury, however, had no difficulty in disillusioning President Young, and was accorded every courtesy by the Saints thereafter.

Both Captain Stansbury and Lieutenant Gunnison made a general study of the Indian question, from the standpoint of army officers, and from personal experiences.

Captain Stansbury reported to his official superiors that there were many reasons for establishing a military post west of the mountains, and that Fort Bridger, in his opinion, offered a number of advantages for the location of such a garrison. The post would go far, he thought, in the interests of amity between the Indians of various tribes warring against one another, and for the safety of the emigrants and the settlers.

Lieutenant Gunnison went so far as to recommend both a fort and an Indian agency, and to urge that James Bridger be made the leading figure in the establishment (42). The Shoshones and Crows were north of the fort; the Ogallalabs and other Sioux to the east, the Cheyennes to the southeast, and the Utes generally on the southern horizon, and all were often in collision.

"A fort and Indian agency, on this neutral war-ground of all these tribes, would communicate with each," says Gunnison. "All their plans could easily be discovered. They could be played off against each other and advantage taken of their animosities. If a humane policy is the proper one, then here is the place for a pacificator, and the interposition of good offices to prevent their internecine contests. And no more influential person could be found in an agency there than the enterprising man already connected with them by marriage and habit, and who now resides as a trader at Fort Bridger.

"The builder of Fort Bridger is one of the hardy race of mountain trappers who are now disappearing from the continent, being enclosed in the wave of civilization. These trappers have made a thousand fortunes for eastern men, and by their improvidence have nothing for themselves. Major Bridger, or 'Old Jim,' has been more wise of late, and laid aside a competence; but the mountain tastes, fostered by twenty-eight years of exciting scenes, will probably keep him there for life."

It is hardly necessary to observe that a garrison at Fort Bridger, which was under non-Mormon ownership and direction, was not a welcome prospect for the people of Utah, especially if James Bridger were to be made Indian agent. But in February, 1851, following the de-

parture of Captain Stansbury and Lieutenant Gunnison from the mountains, matters began looking up decidedly for the Mormons, and Brigham Young was appointed Governor of the Territory and acting Indian agent. Thus the attitude of Utahns toward Fort Bridger was of greater moment than formerly.

Aside from the military importance of the Fort Bridger site, there were other incentives for orienting the Mormon thought in that direction, perhaps a little covetously. Fort Bridger was doing an excellent business among the emigrants and the Indians, and could doubtless be made to do still better business if it were in better hands. Moreover, much of this business came from Utah-bound Mormon emigrants.

By the time the average emigrant train reached the Green River valley, it was usually very badly run down, requiring supplies, repairs, and replacements of draft animals. So heavy was this business that other traders had established themselves on Green River, and elsewhere along the line, some of whom may not have been a great credit to civilization at times. Thus for good reasons the Mormons were interested in the conduct of business in the Green River valley, since the Church was assisting all emigrants to reach Utah, through relief trains and otherwise.

Mormon convert emigrants in 1851 amounted to nearly fifteen hundred from European points alone; eight hundred in 1852, and sailings were booked for more than twenty-five hundred for the first few months of 1853, who would reach Utah that autumn by way of New Orleans, the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, and the Overland route, by way of Fort Bridger. This point, being the diversion for Oregon emigrants and many of the California travelers, was virtually the gateway to the Rocky Mountain Zion.

Bridger's growing prestige with interests farther east may also have caused some jealousy in the hearts of the unhappy Mormons. For five or six years Indian attacks on emigrants had been increasing, due to the eradication

of the wild game by the emigrants and the consequent hungering of the native tribes.

In September, 1851, a treaty council was called by the government in which the government agreed to give the Arapahoes, Cheyennes, and Ogallalah Sioux about \$50,000 in annuities, in return for a cessation of hostilities along the Overland route. "Father De Smet and Jim Bridger gave the benefit of their great knowledge in defining boundaries of the territory of the various Indian tribes" (92).

But before following the Mormons through their maneuverings for the possession of Fort Bridger, it will be of passing interest to look in a moment on the gate-keeper, James Bridger, taking toll of the westbound hosts. The original double house of logs, within a corral of heavy logs placed on end in the ground, erected in 1842 or 1843, was evidently still intact, when, on October 19, 1852, B. G. Ferris and wife halted there on the way to Utah, where Ferris was to become (non-Mormon) Secretary of the Territory, under Governor Brigham Young.

"Bridger came out and invited us in, and introduced us to his Indian wife," writes Mrs. Ferris (47), "and showed us his half-breed children—keen, bright-eyed little things. Everything was rude and primitive. This man strongly attracted my attention; there was more than civility about him—there was native politeness. He is the oldest trapper in the Rocky Mountains; his language is very graphic and descriptive, and he is evidently a man of great shrewdness.

"He alarmed us in regard to our prospects of getting through; said the season had arrived when a heavy snow might be looked for any day; urged us to stay with him all winter; showed us where we could lodge, guarded against the cold with plenty of buffalo skins; and assured us that he could make the benefit of our society and the assistance of Mr. Ferris, in his business, more than compensate for the expenses of living. This was a delicate way of offering the hospitality of his establishment without remuneration.

"His wife was simplicity itself. She exhibited some

curious pieces of Indian embroidery, the work of her own hands, with as much pleased hilarity as a child; and gave me a quantity of raisins and sauce berries—together it was a very pleasant interview. He told us if we were to go, to make as little delay as possible; and made a very acceptable addition to our larder, in the shape of fresh potatoes and other vegetables.”

Bridger was evidently finding it desirable to remain at the fort all winter to attend to business, and guard his interests generally. It seems that Louis Vasquez was giving most if not all his time to the store in Salt Lake City, and that Bridger was practically alone at the fort. At the time the Ferrises called he was in need of assistance, and he was for some time afterward on the lookout for capable help. But those who came to help him out, helped him out literally and completely, as we shall see, and he declares he was fortunate in escaping with his life in his hands.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE MORMONS TAKE FORT BRIDGER

JAMES BRIDGER was an arrowhead in the flesh of the Mormon leaders, fixed as he was in a position of authority and influence at Fort Bridger; and every time the arrowhead was agitated the Church authorities flinched. Bridger had once carried an arrowhead in his flesh until its smarting presence seemed almost a part of him before having it extracted. Likewise Brigham Young bore the Bridger barb for some time before endeavoring strenuously to rid himself and the country of the old scout, and to people the scar with those whom he preferred to trust.

The Mormons had manned some of the ferries on the Overland route, and had deposited stores of goods and herds of animals along the fag end of the emigrant journey, with a humane interest in members of their faith, and with an accurate eye to profitable business with others. But as the season of 1853 approached, with its tremendous Mormon emigration prospective, which promised to be repeated in subsequent years, a concerted move seems to have been made to oust James Bridger and secure a general monopoly on the business and government of Green River valley.

W. A. Hickman, a Utah attorney, who claims, without proof, to have been a confidential agent for Brigham Young in many enterprises (46), states that he spent the winter of 1852-1853 outfitting himself for trade on the emigrant road the following summer. It was his aim to engage in trade chiefly with the Oregon and California emigrants, replacing tired and lame stock, and purchasing all materials and equipment that had become surplus. He was prepared to give in exchange, work cattle, horses and mules, as well as groceries and blacksmithing.

Settling himself on Green River about the first of May, 1853, Hickman was in a position to intercept all emi-

gration before it reached Fort Bridger, thus being in a situation to skim the cream of the business. He states that the mountain men and white traders gave him a profitable patronage for whiskey, of which he had plenty, and from which he took in six or seven hundred dollars, at two dollars a pint.

But there were other energetic traders at the river, and Hickman moved on to Pacific Springs, and got his grocery and shop set up by the arrival of the first of the season's emigrants. "Horse-shoeing, wagon-repairing, and whiskey were all in big demand, and lame stock cheap," he says; and notwithstanding the arrival soon of a well equipped trader from St. Louis, Hickman did an excellent business; many pure-bred cattle were taken at five or ten dollars a head, and large quantities of harness, clothing, tents and wagons were obtained at low prices. He claims he cleared about nine thousand dollars in three months, the business being picked up almost under James Bridger's nose.

Looking in on Fort Bridger at this time (August 6, 1853), we find (58) "It is merely a trading post, then belonging to Major James Bridger, one of the oldest mountaineers in this region. The fort is in the usual form of pickets, with lodging apartments opening into a hollow square. A high picket fence incloses a yard into which the animals of the establishment are driven for protection, both from wild beasts and Indians. The grass in this neighborhood was abundant, but about a mile and a half from the fort, Mr. Bridger had erected a board on which was written a request for all emigrants to keep a mile away from his place."

The Fort Bridger pastures could readily have been devastated by allowing the emigrants' livestock to overrun them. It is obvious, however, that the notice did not apply to the emigrants themselves. A small rude drawing (58) made on that tenth anniversary (approximately) of the completion of the fort, shows a palisade corral inclosing what appears to be two low buildings, whose roofs only are visible above the palisade. There seemed to be no outbuildings nor field fences, indicating, possibly,

that the place had been changed but little, if any, since its original construction.

During that quiet winter of 1852-1853, before the stormy summer in the history of Fort Bridger, the Utah territorial legislature granted a charter to Messrs. Hawley, Thompson, and McDonald, a Utah firm, to operate the emigrant ferries on Green River. The mountaineers, including the proprietors of Fort Bridger at one time, had for many years operated and owned the ferries, and they had resented the act of certain Utah interests in horning into the lucrative business. The legislative act thus was aimed to strengthen the hand of the newer ferrymen.²²

But the mountain men did not acquiesce in the new arrangement, and in retaliation for the claims of protection under a license, they resorted to the only law they knew, the law of self-preservation, enforced with a pistol. In this manner they stood the Mormons off, reaping approximately \$300,000 in tolls during the summer. The sequel in which the mountaineers must have seen some humor, was the filing of a suit against them by the Mormons for that sum of money, in damages. The money was not to be had, but the Mormons soon had their inning, nevertheless, Bridger being at the apex of their next destructive rush, though he does not seem to have been directly implicated in the ferry troubles.

The Green River Mormons trailed back to Utah at the close of the emigrant season, giving currency to the report that James Bridger was selling powder and lead to the Indians with which to kill the Mormons. Whether this ammunition differed in kind or quantity from that which he had for ten years been selling them, with which to kill game and one another, and from that which other traders, including Mormons, had bartered to the red men, the rumor apparently did not elucidate. Affidavits were made out charging Bridger with this alleged crime, and the sheriff was ordered to confiscate Bridger's dangerous

22. A news item in the *Missouri Republican* of November 2, 1853, is condensed as follows: (92) "Mormon emigration is said to have been ten thousand, but perhaps it was not so large. They charged emigrants exorbitantly at the Green River and Bear River ferries, both within their own territory and subject to their laws."

goods, and deliver the old scout to Utah a prisoner (92).

The task of gathering in the old mountaineer was looked upon as no mere pastime, and though haste was necessary, some time was spent in collecting the necessary posse. A total of one hundred and fifty select men were finally engaged, and all set off with some misgivings as to the outcome, though with much determination. Hickman claims (without support) that he was requested by Brigham Young, because of his acquaintance in the valley, to return to Green River with the posse as an aide to Sheriff James Ferguson in this ticklish errand.

But Bridger had no false pride about giving an enemy latitude when needful, and when the army-sized posse arrived at Fort Bridger with a price on the proprietor's head, Bridger was not at home! Conjectures as to his whereabouts and a brief narrative of certain events connected with the affair, are given as follows by a Utah resident (59):

"Fort Bridger was to me an object of great interest, as I had often heard the story which associated with it the fortunes of a man whose name it still bears, told by some of the men who were actors in the wild adventures connected with his disappearance. The interest was not lessened, perhaps, by the mystery that still hangs over it; (June 1, 1856) for the real fate of the daring man who first built the fort is even yet unknown.

"This is not properly a fort, but several adobe buildings arranged for the purpose of defense. They were built and long occupied by a Mr. Bridger, a man of whose early history I have never heard much. He had a family and was well provided it is said with retainers and stores of arms and ammunition and at length became powerful. He was not a Mormon, but was at one time on good terms with the Church. But in an evil hour he incurred the displeasure of the Prophet for some cause not generally known. The matter created great excitement at the time and an expedition was long talked of to bring him to terms. I recollect the matter well; but nothing more was said about it than necessary, and this is the reason why much of the transaction is still shrouded in the same secrecy.

"When the dispute came to the worst an expedition was fitted out from the city to take the fort, with orders to bring back Bridger a prisoner. The city was in a high state of excitement for several weeks, and in constant expectation of the arrival of the captive. I knew many of the men who were members of this party, and I

heard James Ferguson, Hiram Norton, Wiley Norton and Andrew Cunningham and many others, relate all they were at liberty to tell of it after they returned.

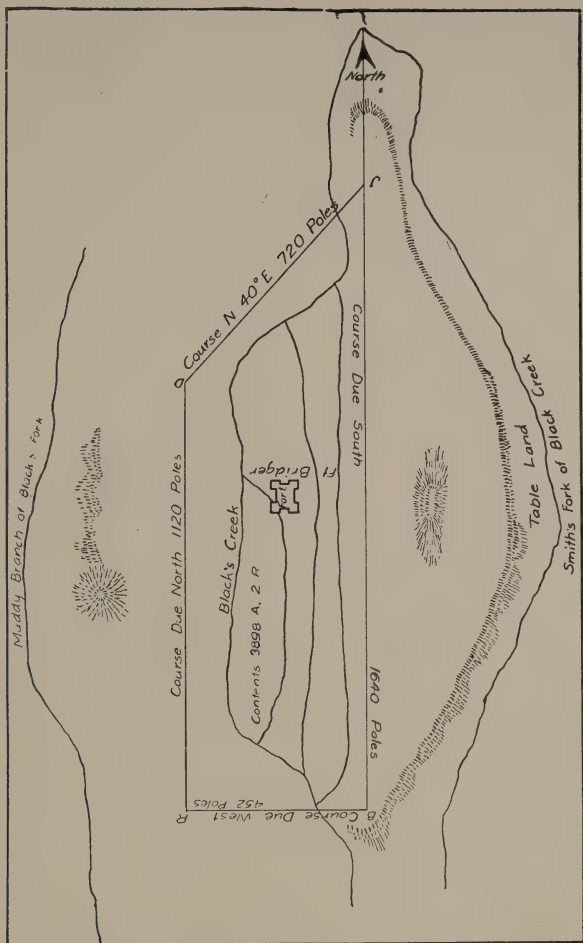
"The party, with Andrew Cunningham in command, arrived at the fort and found Bridger gone. But his wife was there, living quietly as usual. She knew nothing of her husband. Cunningham judged rightly, as it afterwards proved, that Bridger was concealed in the mountains not far off and that he must either return occasionally to the fort for food or that those at the fort must communicate with him for this purpose.

"He therefore withdrew his party, professedly with a view of giving up the enterprise and returning to the city, but afterwards came back with a number of his men and stationed them in secure positions from which strict watch could be kept upon the movements at the fort. The measure was well taken; but Bridger was not easily decoyed, and it took an experienced ranger of the mountains to mislead him or to conceal the signs of what was passing from his practiced eye. It proved therefore to be a long siege. Many weeks passed and no trace of Bridger was found; but the faith of the Mormon leader was strong and he was content to abide his time—and he redoubled his watchfulness.

"The wife was at last detected in holding communication with the proscribed man, no sign of whose whereabouts had before been discovered. It was short work to make out his hiding place after that. What was his fate, or that of his family, none but the few 'Danites' who were engaged in that 'mission' can tell; and for some reason, the same men who had spoken freely to me of other crimes, were silent upon this point. When asked what became of him they did not know. A large amount of property was taken from the fort to the city, among which were arms, powder and lead. The circumstances made a deep impression on my mind at the time."

The real truth of Bridger's whereabouts was probably not as mysterious as the posse would have the people believe, as developed in a few days. As to Bridger's property, little is of record to indicate where it went. The whiskey was "destroyed by doses; the sheriff and most of his officers, the doctor, and the chaplain of the company, all aided in carrying out the orders," to destroy the liquor, says Hickman. The premises were reported to have been stripped of livestock, vehicles, and all portable property belonging to Bridger, who was looked upon as a fugitive lawbreaker.

Passing on to Green River from Fort Bridger the posse had engaged the mountaineers at the ferries in



ORIGINAL FORT BRIDGER SURVEY. Made by J. M. Hockaday for James Bridger, November 6, 1853, and promptly filed in Washington, D. C., with application for patent.

battle, killing two or three, and gathering in several hundred head of livestock, including much whiskey and other property. They had then returned to Salt Lake City with their property, and their report; but it was given out authoritatively from that time that the Mormons were in Green River valley to stay, and that Bridger was out to stay, or his influence was at most greatly minimized.

The fact seems to be that Bridger was never for a moment beyond reach of a most efficient grapevine of mountain gossip, while his enemies were combing the valley for his scalp; and the day the posse finally folded itself away in the dust of Echo Canyon, leaving a clarified atmosphere on Black's Fork, Bridger rose above the table and played his trump card. The ferrymen had lost their lives along with their liquor, but Bridger had evidently not endangered the former with the latter, and his head was clear and his plans well laid for prompt execution.

Reaching Fort Bridger while the posse's tracks were yet open, Bridger, with John M. Hockaday, a government surveyor, began a land survey of Bridger's mountain claim. Hockaday had been engaged on government road work during the summer, and had been many years in the mountains. On November 6, the survey, plat and notes were completed, the survey merely describing "A survey of land made for James Bridger, November 6, 1853, in the Territory of Utah and county of Green River. Beginning at the corner (marked J on the plat, about two miles north by northeast of Fort Bridger) on north side of Black's Fork seventy-two poles (rods) on a due south line from said stream, running thence due south one thousand six hundred and forty poles to a stone corner on east side of said Black's Fork (marked B on the plat) one hundred and sixty poles from said stream on a due west line; thence due west four hundred and fifty-two rods to a stone corner (marked R on the plat); thence due north one thousand one hundred and twenty poles to a stone corner (marked D on the plat) on north side of Black's Fork (marked J on the plat). Contents three thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight acres, two rods. Surveyed by John M. Hockaday.

"Lewis [sic] Vasquez, Charles LaJunesse, and James Bridger settled upon the land within site of fort, as stated by Mr. Bridger.

" 'A true copy of the original' (filed) GENERAL LAND OFFICE (Washington, D. C.), March 9, 1854. JOHN WILSON, Commissioner." (52)

About or just before the time the posse left Utah on their man-hunt around Fort Bridger, at the general conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, held in Salt Lake City on October 8, 1853, the so-called Green River Mission was set apart, a body of men and families, headed by Apostle Orson Hyde, being directed by the Church authorities to settle in the neighborhood of Fort Bridger. It was obviously thought that the summer's work of eradicating the valley of its undesirable elements had been well done, and that it was necessary to follow at once with a permanent colony. Notwithstanding the fact that few if any persons found Fort Bridger a wintering place, and that the valley was already under snow, the settlers left Salt Lake valley November 2.

It was a grievous struggle through the snows of the Wasatch mountains, but the thirty-nine Saints arrived at Fort Bridger on the 15th. They had in their equipment twenty wagons, one hundred and ten cattle, horses and mules, and the seed, grains, potatoes and the like, with the farming machinery necessary to begin farming in the spring. A couple of weeks later fifty-three additional colonists arrived, all being well armed against Indians and mountaineers. The only excuse offered for going that fall and spending the vicious winter in the basin was to cultivate the Indians.

One of the charges given to the settlers was to act as missionaries of religion and civilization to the Indians, with an aim at eliminating Indian troubles. The colonists were to marry among the Indians, just as the mountaineers had done, if the Indians would permit them "to take the young daughters of the chief and leading men" (48) in order to make their interests as nearly identical with the red men as possible. The settlers were

admonished to work in every way against the mountaineers, and drive them from the district because of their influence with the Indians, the explanatory fear being expressed that the government might send troops out to quell the Indians if some one else did not get them under control.

It appears that the leading body of settlers was temporarily without military or ecclesiastical leadership at the time of their arrival at Fort Bridger, where they were considerably cowed by "twelve or fifteen rough mountain men" who seemed to be "very surly and suspicious"; the "spirit of murder and death appeared to be lurking in their minds," Brown, who was one of them, tells us. Naturally this group of Saints lost interest in Fort Bridger, being unprepared for such a reception. Wandering southward, they learned that about twenty additional mountain men, together with a tribe of Ute Indians, had settled for the winter on Henry's Fork.

Green River valley thus looked to these new-comers as if it were held in the fists of "a well-organized band of from seventy-five to a hundred desperadoes"; and the fearful Saints went southwest through the snow, along Smith's Fork, being finally brought to a forced halt by bad traveling conditions at a point about twelve miles southwest of Fort Bridger. Here they chose to abide.

This fortuitous resting place, on ground invisible beneath the snow, became Fort Supply, the headquarters of the supposedly permanent settlement, as the Saints housed themselves in at once in log huts for the winter. The name, Supply, was prophetic in a sense, indicating the aims of the settlement, which were to supply the oncoming emigrants with such home-grown foodstuffs and supplies as the country could afford. But it proved to be, instead, a Fort Disappointment, as the location was not suitable for general agricultural pursuits because of high altitude and cold summers.

The struggles of this little band of obedient Saints form a rather sorrowful story. Raising but a fraction of the crops necessary for their own subsistence during

the discouraging years to follow, and being themselves worthy objects of benevolence at times, the community waned in spite of a worthy determination, and of a strong support from the Utah authorities. There were so many defections, that in spite of a large band of recruits sent again by the Church in 1855, the place never had a greater population than during the first winter, and it was finally abandoned as a failure.

A claim was made public some thirty years after the eventful summer of 1853, that Brigham Young had bought Fort Bridger that year; but in spite of this oft-repeated claim, and the fact that James Bridger did not return to reside at the fort, the details of the transaction are very much beclouded. Lewis Robinson, quartermaster-general of the Utah militia, or Nauvoo Legion of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, was credited with being the purchaser for the Church. The sum mentioned was \$8,000.

This information seems to have come chiefly from writers in later years who themselves were unfamiliar with the circumstances. "(1853) November 1 . . . President (Brigham) Young purchased of James Bridger a Mexican grant for thirty square miles of land and some cabins, afterward known as Fort Bridger. This was the first property owned by the Saints in Green River county," says a booklet (51) issued in 1884 by the Church "for the use of Saints and strangers."

This entry is repeated, substantially, in Jenson's Church Chronology, under date of November 2, 1853. "Previous to this President Brigham Young purchased of James Bridger a Mexican grant for thirty square miles of land and some cabins, afterwards known as Fort Bridger. This was the first property owned by the Church in Green River county." Thus, in 1898 and 1914, the dates of publication, no additional information was available. But if the Mormons owned Fort Bridger on November 1, 1853, or previously, why were Fort Supply settlers inhospitably received on November 15 of that year? And if the posse could not find James Bridger on November 1, of whom was it bought?

James Bridger's own version of the affair is probably given in the language of Captain Marcy (49), with whom Bridger was an intimate associate before the matter was written. "Here he erected an establishment which he called Fort Bridger," says Captain Marcy; "and here he was for several years prosecuting a profitable traffic both with the Indians and with California emigrants. At length, however, his prosperity excited the cupidity of the Mormons, and they intimated to him that his presence in such close proximity to their settlements was not agreeable, and advised him to pull up stakes and leave forthwith; and upon his questioning the legality or justice of this arbitrary summons, they came to his place with a force of "avenging angels" and forced him to make his escape to the woods in order to save his life. He remained secreted for several days, and through the assistance of his Indian wife was enabled to elude the search of the Danites and make his way to Fort Laramie, leaving all his cattle and other property in possession of the Mormons."

Then on October 27, 1873, Bridger dictated a letter to Gen. B. F. Butler, then United States Senator, soliciting political aid in connection with reclamations at Fort Bridger, stating among other things (52): "I was robbed and threatened with death by the Mormons, by the direction of Brigham Young, of all my merchandise, livestock, in fact everything I possessed, amounting to more than \$100,000 worth, the buildings in the fort partially destroyed by fire, and I barely escaped with my life."

It is conceivable that at mountain prices Bridger's holdings amounted to a large sum of money, though it is probable that the \$100,000 included a goodly sum for heart balm.

After completing the survey of the Fort Bridger lands in 1853, Bridger left with his family, going direct, it is believed, to the farm at Little Santa Fe, Jackson County, Missouri (92). Bridger himself proceeded to St. Louis, and through official channels transmitted his land survey papers to the General Land Office for proper filing. The filing was done on March 9, 1854. He also explored

some of the avenues necessary for acquiring final title to his homestead, evidently not being aware of its purchase by any one. The daughter Josephine, and the son, "Rocky Mountain" Felix, were taken from the parochial school that spring, and left with the wife at the farm, where Bridger himself spent some time, going back to the mountains in the summer or autumn, and stopping at Fort Laramie.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE MORMONS TAKE FORT BRIDGER (Concluded)

BRIDGER'S enemies, grown still greater in power and determination, returned to the Green River Valley in the spring of 1854, clothed in garments of authority said to have been especially cut out by Brigham Young. Green River County had been organized by the Utah legislature that winter, the boundaries of which had been made to include Fort Bridger and the ferries on Green River. W. I. Appleby was appointed probate judge, with authority to select the other county officers.

Brigham Young is said to have instructed Judge Appleby to appoint William A. Hickman county sheriff, which was done, the offices of prosecuting attorney, assessor, and collector being also placed on Hickman's capable shoulders. Hickman demurred (46), preferring to return to Pacific Springs and trade with the emigrants again, but he claims to have feared to disobey instructions. Governor Young had requested Hickman to remain on Green River that summer, and use his influence in quieting down the mountaineers.

Dark and highly charged threats had reached the Mormons that the mountain men intended to retaliate on the Saints for their treatment at the ferries, levying at least as much property in return, even if it cost as many lives. Fearing this would include innocent Mormon emigrants, Hickman says his instructions were to "pitch in and kill those that would not come to terms" of peace in any other way. L. B. Ryan, a leader of opposing ferry interests, was especially selected for such disposal that summer, since he persisted in operating a ferry without the formality of a permit from Governor Young (46). Ryan's explanation was that the license cost was exorbitant and the privilege discriminatory.

The county seat was established at the Mormon ferries, Hawley, Thompson and McDonald having returned to

operate them under the wing of the county authorities. Hickman says he felt it desirable to cultivate the graces of Uncle Jack Robinson, squaw man, who antedated James Bridger on Black's Fork bottoms, residing a short distance below the fort. Robinson is said to have accumulated about \$75,000, most of which was invested in St. Louis property, though he dwelt by preference with his Indian relatives in the mountains.

Hickman explained that he desired to use Uncle Jack in cultivating both the red men and the remaining mountaineers. It was well known that Robinson was a staunch friend of Bridger's.

Hickman's first coup was the arrest of Ryan, when Ryan started his ferry in 1854. Two decoys were sent to Ryan's ferry, who engaged Ryan in conversation while Hickman followed a few minutes later with drawn guns. The decoys roped the prisoner and took him to the "county seat," Judge Appleby then temporarily sojourning at Fort Supply, in a company with Apostle Orson Hyde, who was on a brief trip. But Ryan proved to be a sociable bird, if not actually a bird of a feather, and promptly became a companion and an associate rather than a prisoner of the sheriff, surrendering all his ferry interests to vested authority, and leaving for Salt Lake City that fall when the county authorities went back to the Salt Lake valley for the winter.

The spring of 1855 brought the Utah people again into Green River valley, this time with a few new cards to be played, being the final hand in the game in which the historical old Fort Bridger was wrested from its builder forever. Sheriff-Prosecutor-Assessor-Collector Hickman bought a fourth interest in the Green River ferries that summer to keep himself busy, the county seat being hauled to and fro in Judge Appleby's hat and Hickman's saddlebags.

Here again appears the assertion that the Mormons purchased Fort Bridger. Writing in his biography under date of the autumn of 1857, of events at Fort Bridger, including the arrival of Johnston's army, Hickman says: "The post was then, and had been for two years, owned

by the Church, and in possession of Mr. Robinson, who had charge of the same from the time of its purchase, I having been one of the carriers of the heavy load of gold it took to purchase said place with the (live) stock and goods thereon."

This is probably the most direct and circumstantial evidence appearing in print of the purchase of the post, though standing alone it lacks much to make it a final proof, since we have definite knowledge that James Bridger was on an expedition in another part of the country at the time and could not have participated in the transfer of Fort Bridger. There is a strong probability that only the Vasquez equity was referred to, yet when the post was leased to the United States Army in 1857, Bridger gave Vasquez' name as part owner.

The Mormon Church authorities apparently had reason to believe they had effected the purchase of certain rights at Fort Bridger, as shown by the following entry in the Church Historian's Office Journal, under date of October 18, 1858, though the entry itself suggests that there may have been a question or controversy as to these rights.

"Louis Vasquez, of the firm of Bridger and Vasquez, executed a bill of sale of Fort Bridger, and acknowledged receipt of \$4,000 on August 3, 1855, and \$4,000 this day (October 18, 1858)—also acknowledged before Samuel A. Gilbert, clerk of Third District Court, that Hiram F. Morrell was his lawfully appointed agent and that he fully approved of the acts and doings of said Morrell in the sale of said property."

Vasquez not only had an interest in the business at Fort Bridger, but is understood to have had some agricultural land near by, possibly within the original Fort Bridger area. There were also other trappers squatted in the locality whose interests might have caused complications in the plans of the Mormons. But it has not been possible to ascertain precisely what property was covered by the bill of sale referred to. The Mormon Church historians have not been able to find any deeds or other papers to elucidate the transfer, beyond the above Journal entry,

though it is believed by them that some such papers are in the files.

A few buildings were constructed at the fort that summer by the Mormons, and a heavy wall of cobblestone masonry was erected to replace the original picket wall of logs on end. At some later date the Mormons must have taken steps to have their purchase recognized by the government, for the War Department told Coutant (18) that "The Mormons set up a claim (date not known) to the land on which the post was located on the ground of a conveyance from James Bridger, who was said to hold a Spanish grant for the same."

"There is a story told by E. A. Curley, a special correspondent of the *London Field*," says Coutant (18), "who wrote some letters to his paper from Wyoming in 1873. These letters were republished in 1874 by the Wyoming Board of Immigration, and from among them I select the following extract regarding a visit paid by the correspondent to Fort Bridger and the old mountaineer of that name. [It will not be forgotten that Bridger was on his Missouri farm at that time, 1873, and not at Fort Bridger. Mr. Curley seems to have secured the facts for this story from Judge Carter, the post trader at Fort Bridger at that time.]

"The post is nestled in a beautiful valley with babbling brooks running through and around it. It was named after a famous hunter, trapper and guide, Jim Bridger, who passed about fifty years of his life in the wild regions of the Rocky Mountains. He was a great favorite with the Indians, and, with a natural fondness for mountain scenery, he traversed the country in every direction, sometimes accompanied by an Indian, but oftener alone—the beaver that he caught making his excursions as profitable as they were interesting to this wildest of mountain nimrods. He familiarized himself with every mountain peak, every deep gorge, almost every hill and landmark in an immense region of country. Few objects of interest to a hunter escaped his scrutiny, and he was said never to forget what once he had seen.'

"By long intercourse with Indians, he learned their language became familiar with their signs, adopted their habits, conformed to their customs, was imbued with some of their superstitions, and at length excelled them in strategy. In the course of his checkered life he saw marvels enough to have formed the stock in trade of a regiment of fair-weather travelers, and of novelists after—generally a long way after—Fenimore Cooper. But the actual marvels of which he had seen so many never satisfied Jim

Bridger; he delighted in tough yarns, in which he was quite an artist, telling his most Munchausen-like stories with such an air of literal accuracy, and with such an appearance of honest indignation at the slightest shadow of doubt, as generally enabled him to impose upon the credulity of the many. Mr. Hepworth Dixon, in his trip across the American continent, became the prey of artists far less skillful than old Jim; and it is almost a pity that he did not have the fortune to meet the greatest liar on the American continent, and extend his very interesting book to three volumes in consequence.'

"Bridger built a ranch on the site of the present post, where he had a few cattle in partnership with one Vasquez, who was, I believe, a Mexican half-breed. When the Mormon pioneers first passed this way to Salt Lake he probably acted as their guide. At any rate he so far sophisticated President Brigham Young—who was even then an old bird not easily caught—that he bought out Bridger, who pretended to hold a stretch of thirty miles under a Mexican grant, paying him down \$4,000 for the grant, the shanties and the cattle, and agreeing to pay \$4,000 more at a subsequent time. The place became too hot for the Mormons; they had to leave and Bridger rented his pretended grant to Gen. A. S. Johnston for a military post for \$600 a year on a ten years' lease. Taking a copy of this provisional lease, he then journeyed to Salt Lake and succeeded in raising the other \$4,000 from the Mormon prophet. But the contract to be valid must be confirmed at Washington. A diligent search revealed the fact that there was no Mexican grant, and that Bridger was kindly obliging the government for a substantial consideration with a piece of its own property.'

"The bargain consequently fell through, and the post was established without payment of rental, but old Jim had the pleasure of spending the \$8,000. President Young had made repeated applications to have his claim allowed; but although it is quite as good as many another that had passed muster, it is very unlikely that the prophet will ever find profitable his \$8,000 investment in Bridger. He still maintains, however, that he was never so unwise as to be outdone by old Jim; that his deeds are all right in his possession; and that it is nothing but the willful injustice of Uncle Sam that withholds from him this magnificent domain.'"

Bancroft's fact-finders (10) for his history of Utah to 1886 say, without citing their authority, that the Mormons paid \$8,000 for Fort Bridger in 1853, and expended an equal amount in improvements the next year, the context and phrasing of the entry tracing directly to the handbook (51) already cited herein. To increase the density of the haze within which the transaction flits elu-

sively, Bancroft gives a footnote, "The deeds are now in the possession of the church officials at Salt Lake City," taken from the Transactions of the Wyoming Academy of Sciences for 1882. He also adds to the note: "Miles Goodyear, the owner, was married to a sister of the Indian chief, Walker." The latter statement may be no more reliable than the former, concerning Fort Bridger, since the writer of the Academy of Sciences article claims the purchase was made in 1854 instead of 1853.²³

There is internal evidence in abundance that this last named article furnishes the language for all other references to the affair, excepting those of Hickman and the Church Historian's Journal above quoted. There is also internal evidence in the article, which is quoted herewith, which seems to trace the information directly to Judge William A. Carter, post sutler with the army at Fort Bridger for many years; and this is substantiated by other sources of information. Judge Carter virtually succeeded James Bridger (and Lewis Robinson) in charge of the trading post and the ranch lands under Bridger's survey, having settled there with the Army in the winter of 1857-1858. Thus he could have had no information about the transfer of Fort Bridger except that gained by hearsay; and the author of the article credits his information to the Mormons themselves, indicating its ultimate origin.

Col. Albert G. Brackett, U. S. A., stationed at Fort D. A. Russell, Cheyenne, in 1880-1882, read the paper entitled

23. Sol. H. Hale, Boise, Idaho, writes June 9, 1924, in part as follows: "I met Jim Bridger only twice in my life, but I remember him very well. Both meetings were in Salt Lake City, and within about a year of each other. The first time I saw him was about the year 1858. I was sitting in Captain William H. Hooper's office in Salt Lake City, talking with him and his bookkeeper, William Clayton, when Jim Bridger and Chauncey W. West came walking into the room. Colonel Bridger and Captain Hooper enjoyed each other's personal acquaintance and seemed to converse on common ground. Their conversation had to do with settlement of some land matters.

"Bridger was dressed in the usual mountaineer garb of the time, and I particularly remember his buckskin coat with fringe down the sleeves, which he was wearing at the time. His hair was long and his face was bearded. He spoke fluently and with great earnestness. One was readily impressed with the sincerity and honesty of the man. He was a man of character, embodying great courage and leadership. Very naturally he partook of the nature of his environment and life on the frontier, and was rough and even formidable in his appearance.

"First Settlements in Wyoming," at the first session of the Wyoming Academy of Sciences, which was held in Cheyenne January 17, 1882. We are herein concerned with but a portion of the paper, as follows:

"The second permanent settlement made in Wyoming was at Fort Bridger, which was established as a fur trading post by James Bridger in 1842 (1843). Here the old mountaineer lived in a sort of barbaric pomp, surrounded by the dusky children of the mountains, owning considerable flocks and herds, and being in fact a frontier baron. Here he lived until long after the advent of the Mormons, and until 1854, when he sold to Lewis Robinson, a Mormon, his Mexican grant for thirty miles of land and some cabins, for which he was paid \$8,000 in gold. The deeds for this property are now in possession of the dignitaries at Salt Lake City.

"In 1855 the Mormons built a boulder stone wall one hundred feet square, fourteen feet high, with rounded corners, and a corral or cattle yard eighty-two feet wide, and made other improvements at the rancho or fort, expending, as the Mormons claim, \$8,000 more, and for a long time it was the county seat of Green River County, Utah. Judge William A. Carter, late a resident at the fort, and a most estimable citizen, was for many years probate judge of the county (from September 6, 1870). . . .

"Near Fort Bridger Mr. Robinson resides, who is unquestionably the oldest white settler in the territory. He was born in North Carolina in 1802, and came to this country by way of Taos, New Mexico, in 1832. Here he has since remained. He was a warm personal friend of Mr. James Bridger, and assisted many emigrants while on their way to California in 1849. He was known over the whole country as "Uncle Jack Robinson." In the palmy days of 1849 and '50, Mr. Bridger had a partner named Vasquez, a Mexican, who put on a great deal of style, and used to ride about the country in a coach and four."

Bancroft, who did not find the Fort Bridger deeds in the church historian's files in 1886, but quoted an outside authority, changed his mind about the sale of the property when he wrote his History

"My second meeting with the famous mountaineer was on the old public square, situated northwest of the tabernacle block in Salt Lake City, where he met President Brigham Young and Dimick Huntington, an Indian interpreter, and discussed Indian affairs. I participated to a limited extent in this discussion upon invitation of the president, whose personal acquaintance and friendship I enjoyed. I particularly observed that Colonel Bridger came readily into the association of big men, and he was given by men of prominence courtesies and considerations that are not usually extended to men of ordinary rank and character.

"I never enjoyed any personal or intimate association with Colonel Bridger, and therefore I will not attempt to give other than my foregoing general impressions of him."

of Wyoming to 1888. He mentions most of the authorities herein quoted, and says of the alleged land transfer: "This is a mistake, as there were no Spanish grants in that region." Of Bridger and his leaving Fort Bridger, Bancroft says: "He abandoned it in 1853, being warned by the Mormons who did not desire a hostile fort in the neighborhood of their settlements."

This view is partially supported by an item of news in the *Missouri Republican*, St. Louis, Mo., November 5, 1853, condensed as follows (92): "Nov. 5th. Theodore Winthrop of New York arrived from Puget Sound. Mormons had accused Jim Bridger of selling ammunition and arms to Indians hostile to them, whereupon forty of them were sent by Governor Young to arrest him. He fled to the mountains. They took his fort and lived upon his provisions but soon returned home. Soon Bridger, with his wife and children, started east and would probably arrive at Westport next week."

It is known that Bridger had no ownership title to the land within his paddock from a communication (52) given in full in a later chapter in connection with Bridger's claims against the government in his later years. In it the Commissioner of the General Land Office says:

"There is nothing on file in this office showing that any lease of Fort Bridger, or any part thereof, was ever made with Mr. Brown, his name not even appearing in a plat of survey filed in this office in 1854 by James Bridger, who claimed in accordance with said private survey executed by J. M. Hockaday.

"This office has never recognized any private claim in the vicinity of Fort Bridger."

Bridger and his Mexican partner, Vasquez, doubtless had some papers of authority from the Mexican government, as indicated by these two following paragraphs taken from a statement by Bridger's attorney made to the Senate Committee on Claims, quoted in full in a later chapter.

"Under the auspices of the governor of Chihuahua, in 1843, before the Mexican War, Capt. James Bridger was induced under a promise by the government of a large grant of land, to establish a colony in Green River County, Utah, then Mexican territory, which he did at great expense, and erected Fort Bridger for protection against Indians, at a cost of over \$20,000.

"Under the Spanish rule he was to plant said colony and retain possession of the country for a term of years before he was to receive the title to that grant."

But the old scout's filing system was faulty, and he claims he lost all the preliminary papers, which, in the end, prevented his gaining a deed to a foot of the old

West, which, at one time, might easily have been considered entirely his own, as much as anyone's.

The change in occupancy and proprietorship did not appear to change the general atmosphere about Fort Bridger, the mountaineers being welcomed as formerly, while their money lasted. William Chandless (50) arrived at the post on October 15, 1855, as driver for a freighting train. He fails to mention the proprietor in any manner that would indicate his identity, but describes the place as a gay rendezvous on the Sunday of his arrival, "the place being enlivened by a score or two of mountaineers, and a band of Indians with ponies to sell."

Chandless thought the mountaineers were a grim looking set, "few of them but would shoot a stranger whose buttons they chanced to fancy," though he concluded, having been among frontiersmen for some time, that they were "rather better than the average of the world." "Cards and whiskey were the order of the day," though the storekeeper judiciously managed to keep an orderly house.

Hickman says the emigrant business was very light in 1856, reducing the incomes of the Green River settlers appreciably. In 1857 Fort Bridger looked up a bit, becoming temporarily a station on the new Brigham Young Express and Mail line to the Missouri River. But in the early winter of 1857 Johnston's army of United States troops appeared on the crest of the continent, planning to make a friendly call at Salt Lake; and their appearance was a signal to the Mormons in Green River valley to burn everything inflammable, which could not be loaded onto a wagon or driven away on legs, including every vestige of Fort Bridger except the new stone wall; and to retreat into Utah defiantly brandishing their smoking firebrands.

CHAPTER XXXIX

BRIDGER MIXES WITH ROYALTY

JAMES BRIDGER may have been the scum of the earth to the Mormons, but to Sir George Gore, a wealthy Irish nobleman rustivating in the Rockies in 1854-1856, Bridger was a diamond in the rough, an unpolished gem in the clasp of the mountain prongs. Sir George was a Nimrod of extraordinary ambitions and an insatiable adventurer; but his one great adventure was his association with Bridger.

Reciprocating the deep and genuine affection bestowed upon him, Bridger held Sir George in high esteem, even after more than a year of intimate association. With \$200,000 annual income to spend or to be worried about, Sir George refused to worry, but journeyed from Sligo, Ireland, to St. Louis, where he outfitted a hunting expedition in the most elaborate style.

With a retinue of forty servants and assistants, and a companion or two with scientific inclinations, and an outfit consisting of one hundred and twelve horses, twelve yoke of oxen, six wagons and twenty-one carts, laden with every conceivable luxury and sportsman's convenience or necessity, including a small arsenal of ammunition and the finest of firearms, the whole enlivened by fourteen hunting dogs, Sir George made his way to the Rocky Mountains overland in the fall of 1854, with Henry Chatillon and brother as guides.

After hunting the Black Hills and the Colorado Rockies, he settled himself luxuriously among his servants and his primitive surroundings for the winter at Fort Laramie. James Bridger happened to be at Fort Laramie on temporary business, and was returning soon to the farm near Kansas City, when Sir George arrived. But it seems to have been a case of love at first sight for both Sir George and Bridger, each changing the course of events for the other very widely.

Sir George had been drawn across an ocean and a continent by the untamed conditions of the Rocky Mountains, teeming with big game of every kind, and swarming with wild Indians of many nations; but he felt that he had attained the acme of his ambitions upon meeting a mountaineer who for more than thirty years had subsisted very largely on Rocky Mountain wild game, and had for his most numerous companions the native tribes of red men, yet who was a man of Sir George's own race and tendencies.

Clothed in the buckskin and fur of the frontiersman, Bridger presented a striking appearance; tall, straight, and rather agile and sinewy, he stood a little above the average man in his moccasins. A kindly expression, verging on the humorous, was apparent in his steady but slightly faded blue-gray eyes. His bronzed, leathery face was but thinly haired, and was wreathed in a more conspicuous but still scanty growth of chin and neck beard. A moderate mass of long dark hair overhung his collar at the back and shoulders.

His manner was gracious and cordial, and his actions were straightforward and rather independent, though always generous and trustful, bespeaking the bestowal of a confidence which he expected to be reciprocated. There was much of cunning efficiency manifested in his habits and actions, but there was a total absence of deception, or guile.

Here was not only a past master in the craft of the mountaineer, and an Indian interpreter and pacificator which Sir George required, but a hunter who knew the habits and location of the wild game in the West. To crown this efficiency with a trait of especial interest to Sir George, Bridger had a vocabulary or mountaineer's dialect, and a personal atmosphere of a thousand adventures, as picturesque and as resourceful as the history of the mountains themselves.

Bridger did not distinguish between a nobleman and an Indian in his bestowals of respect when he believed it to be due; and he generally called things by their right names with a refreshing freedom insofar as his command

of language would permit; both of which traits greatly appealed to the titled and over-pampered Irishman.

The Gore party had a winter of inactivity before them before decamping in the spring of 1855, but Bridger was engaged immediately for entertainment and conversational purposes. When offered the employment for the following season he accepted with the proviso that he be placed at once on the payroll. Sir George agreed with the stipulation that Bridger should become a member of the party forthwith and be freely communicative for the edification of the party.

The winter was a lively one, socially, at Fort Laramie, many mountaineers calling to pay their respects to royalty, and to give royalty a chance to see the mountaineers. Bridger was the chief of all mountain scouts, and was so accredited by his fellow-mountaineers, who aided in elevating him to the pinnacle of Sir George's admiration. So the winter soon passed, and the game slaughtering expedition got under way as the chinook sucked up the last snow from the Platte bottoms.

Bridger led the blue-bloods along the emigrant road up the Platte to Casper Creek, where his experience told him the carts and wagons could be conducted over the divide to the north into the headwaters of the Powder River. At a pleasant place the party headquartered, while hunting the basin thoroughly, this region being well known to Bridger, having been his winter home on more than one occasion and his spring and autumn hunting and trapping ground on many another occasion.

Through the summer the party moved down the Powder River to its junction with the Yellowstone. They then turned up the Yellowstone, hunting the valley on the way, and finally turned up the Tongue River a distance of about eight miles, where they forted up for the winter, of 1855-1856. This forting up in the wilderness, and subsisting and existing in such primitive fashion, was an ordeal for many of the tenderfeet, but was made possible by the mountain-craft of Bridger; and for Sir George the winter was made endurable by the companionship of the old scout.



FORT LARAMIE, Wyoming, sketched by Percy in 1853. Historic rendezvous for mountain men and Indians for many years; much frequented by James Bridger, and scene of his last mountain activity. (58)

But in most other respects, especially in their relationships with other mountain men, and the native Indian tribes, the winter became a bugbear. The Irishman and his party were active, sallying forth almost daily on hunting trips at greater or less distance; and they were rather profligate in their destruction of game, and in their quest for trophies. The mountaineers and Indians thus resented this wanton slaughter, notwithstanding their own inroads on the game in former years. Big game by the thousands, principally buffalo, and the birds of the open by countless numbers, fell before the deadly firearms of royalty; and the titled visitor soon wore out his welcome in the mountains.

The spring of 1856 saw the Gore party drifting down the Yellowstone River to Fort Union, where their picturesque and unique train of wagons and animals, laden with trophies of many sorts, arrived during the summer. This post was the front doorway to the mountains for Bridger, and there were many marks about the threshold of interest to him, which added the final chapter in the store of mountain lore and adventure for Sir George.

But the reputation of the royal sportsman had preceded him down the river, and the welcome that awaited him was one aimed at extracting as much of his wealth as possible, and sending him down the river light. He managed to arrange transportation for his skins, skulls, birds, horns and antlers at what he considered a reasonable figure, since downgoing boats were usually easily handled and seldom heavy laden, owing to the waning of the fur trade.

But when he sought to have his carts and wagons delivered to St. Louis, or even midway to the frontier, the post commander, Major Culbertson, figured the cost of boat construction and transportation out of reach for even a man with nothing but time and money to spend. The major seems to have thus stunned the goose that was laboring to lay for him a golden egg, with the result that Sir George's wrath rose against every one who might be clutching at his money-bags.

Separating from the equipment, all his trophies of

worth, and his personal effects, Sir George ordered a funeral pyre of all the rest of the equipage, including the carts, wagons, harnesses and saddles. He was determined that no human ghoul should prey upon the bones of his departed pleasures, and not even Bridger's protests availed against the complete destruction of the most picturesque and elaborate sportsman's caravan that ever entered the Rocky Mountains. Even the iron parts of the vehicles were guarded at the bonfires until cool, and were then thrown into the Missouri River.

Embarking in canoes, Sir George betook his party a week's journey downstream to Fort Berthold (formerly Fort Clark and Fort Mandan), where he tied up for the winter of 1856-1857. He had found Fort Union infested with robbers, and preferred, in any event, to spend the winter with the Minatarees or Gros Ventres villaging about Fort Berthold, before he left the wilderness forever in the summer of 1857.*

James Bridger had been in more or less constant touch with affairs at Fort Bridger, through the medium of the courier system and gossip communicated by trappers, traders, and Indians, all of whom had at least a passing, if not actually a passionate, interest in Bridger's fortunes. Thus he knew that time was raising the barriers against

*The original narrative of Sir George Gore's expedition (1854-1856) was written in Volume 1, 1876, Contributions, Montana Historical Society, by F. Geo. Heldt, from conversations with *Henry Bostwick*, a member of the Gore party. It follows in full:

"One of the most considerable expeditions to the Rocky Mountains undertaken by individual enterprise, was that of Sir George Gore. He was a resident of Sligo, in Ireland, and is now about sixty years of age, and in 1875 made a trip to the everglades of Florida. He seems to have had no other purpose in his western journey than pleasure and to justify an intense but somewhat eccentric curiosity.

"His retinue consisted of forty men, supplied with one hundred and twelve horses—some very fine ones—twelve yoke of cattle, fourteen dogs, six wagons, and twenty-one carts. The time occupied by this adventure was three years, during which time he lost but one man, who died at the mouth of Tongue River, during the winter of 1855-56. The party left St. Louis in 1854 and journeyed to Fort Laramie, on the north fork of the Platte River, where the first winter of 1854-55 was spent, and where the party shared the wild delights of the chase, which there, at that early time, almost rivaled in their profusion those of the valleys of the Yellowstone and its tributaries.

"The isolation of this fort at that early time excelled that of any other fort in the West, and the wild hunters, trappers, traders and adventurers who made that their headquarters and occasional rendezvous, were a motley group of characters worthy a winter's experience, and Sir George made them an interesting study. Here, too, he made the acquaintance of some of the Indian tribes upon whose hunting grounds he was about to intrude; and what with the traders, the hunters, the soldiers, and the Indians, the winter sped pleasantly away. In the spring his animals were recuperated and he added to his supplies and started north over an old trail of the trappers and Indians to the headwaters of the Powder River. Here, a half century ago, had been built a trading post, long occupied by a Portuguese, and known as the 'Portuguese Fort.' But Sir George was seeking not companionship, but the vast solitudes and fastnesses of the mountains, so he did not tarry, but pushed on down the Powder River, making frequent diversions to enjoy the delights of the chase.

his return to the post. The Mormons were securely in the saddle, and the trade was learning the sound of a new master's voice.

Thus the old scout refrained from returning over the mountains for a look in at Fort Bridger, but accompanied Sir George to Fort Berthold and got the Irishman introduced to his new neighbors. He then parted affectionately and regretfully with his distinguished friend, and for old time's sake, enjoyed a canoe trip down the river to Kansas City and a visit to his family on the farm, whom he had not seen since the birth of the baby Mary, in 1854.

Deepest in his heart was his mistreatment by the Mormons, and it was doubtless music to his ears to hear that others were having griefs with the Saints, even the government being unable to govern them with territorial officers, according to general gossip, and to numerous newspaper and magazine articles throughout the country. A national election occurred soon after Bridger's arrival in the settlements, and a new president, Buchanan, it

"Arriving at the mouth of the Powder River, he turned up the Yellowstone to the mouth of Tongue River, where he tarried a long time.

"About eight miles above the mouth, and up the Tongue River, he built a fort, where the principal portion of his command wintered. But the grazing and game at the mouth of Tongue River was fine, and here Sir George kept his stock, and himself remained.

"He was remote from man, indifferent to the issues of wars, the fall of empires, nor did he heed the thousand struggles which then taxed the energies of so many men.

"It was here that one of his men called 'Uno' died. When the grass had sufficiently grown the party left their 'happy hunting grounds' and ascended the Tongue River. At the first considerable canyon they came to a creek called 'Wolf's Tooth' Creek. Thence they went to the head of the Rosebud River, to Wolf mountain, in search of an immense Crow camp of which they had heard. Finding the camp they remained several days conversing with if not enjoying the companionship of several vagabond whites who had become identified with the Crows.

"The party returned from Wolf mountain to the mouth of Tongue River. Here Sir George and a portion of his party constructed two flat-boats, and sending his wagons and the greater portion of his command to Fort Union by land, he with his crews descended the Yellowstone in safety.

"Arriving at Fort Union, then a trading post of the American Fur Company in charge of Major Culbertson, he agreed with the company for the construction of two Mackinaw boats, with which to descend the river, the company agreeing to take his stock, wagons, etc., at some stipulated price. When the boats were finished there was a misunderstanding as to the terms of the bargain and he fancied that in his remoteness from man the company was seeking to speculate upon his necessities. He seems to have been mercurial, wrathful, effervescent and reckless, and, heedless of the consequences, he would not stand the terms prescribed. He accordingly burned his wagons and all the Indian goods and supplies not needed in front of the fort, guarding the flames from the plunder of whites and Indians.

"It is said he was apprehensive that the members of the fur company might rescue from the flames the hot irons of his wagons and carts, and having guarded them until night came on, he threw them all into the Missouri River.

"His cattle and horses he sold to the vagabond hangers-on of the Indians there or gave them away, and with the two flat-boats he had built at the mouth of the Tongue River, he proceeded with his party, now decimated by mutual consent, to Berthold.

"Here he wintered, an Indian chief known as the Crow's Breast hospitably abandoning to the generous and eccentric stranger his house. Fort Berthold at this time was so near to the frontier that it was supplied by rival traders and was torn by the petty feuds and vigorous jealousies which accompany civilization. It was Washington Irving's Little

was generally believed, would make quick work of the Mormon resistance, by sending soldiers as officers of the courts among the Saints. Even the mails were in difficulty, and emigrants, and transportation interests generally were interested in having the Mormons justified or brought to terms in their differences with the territorial officers.

Bridger was a keen-eyed blacksmith, and it looked to him like a time for him to strike, while the iron was hot. He found sympathetic friendships among prominent business men and politicians; and finally, it is said, he journeyed to Washington, D. C., where he not only acquainted himself with the government's attitude toward the Mormons, but made certain officials acquainted with his own views of the Mormons, and was presented by a Missouri senator to the President (53).

The picturesque old frontiersman was a conspicuous and interesting character in the nation's capital, and gained some publicity in the press, though the principal notoriety resulting from this emerging from the mountains was deferred until a little later through the smouldering interest in a certain journalist's heart. Bridger's sojourn in the domiciles of civilization was probably not

Britain over again. The Lambs and Trotters had divided the breech-clouted savages, the mocassined half-breeds and the buckskin-shirted Caucasian into hostile clans, and the short-hair and long-hair armies waged a relentless warfare.

"The trade of the place was not immense, nor was it exceedingly lucrative, and the arrival of Sir George Gore was an event of no small moment, especially as his wants and those of his party were not inconsiderable, and his liberality bordered on extravagance. He had been purchasing his beeves of one of the prominent actors in the heady feud, which had annihilated brotherly love in Berthold, at \$50 per head. If he was not unconscious of the fight going on he certainly sought to disguise his nativity by remaining neutral. One day his beef contractor raised fifty per cent on his goods, whereupon the testy Sir George went to the rival dealer in herds, who charged him \$30 per head; whereupon, although he had no use for more than a half dozen head, he purchased fifty head—perhaps with a view of inculcating a moral lesson. He became thenceforth a great favorite at Berthold, but we bear willing witness that this little essay of his in moral philosophy was seed sown in barren ground, and has not yet brought forth any fruit whatever. But Berthold, in the spring of 1857, lost Sir George, who returned to St. Louis by steamboat.

"The guide of this expedition, as of so many others, was Mr. James Bridger, who, for a man who so habitually draws the long bow to an unparalleled tension, has better recommendations for reliability and truthfulness from guileless lieutenants and credulous wayfarers than the world elsewhere will afford.

"The men of this expedition nearly all remain along and near the theatre of this adventure, as proud of their achievements and hero as are the followers of Cardigan, Nelson, Napoleon or Sherman. Rumors of the immense herds of bison which surrounded his camp in the winter of 1855-56, and of the slaughter of them in great number, induced the government of the United States to take measures to prevent his further depredations.

"The immediate region in which he spent this winter was the paradise of the buffalo, and consequently a favorite haunt of the red man of the forest, who brought complaints of the needless and reckless destruction of these animals to their agents, and the government intervened."

to his liking, and we find him making quick work of his business. He was back at Fort Laramie in the early summer of 1857 in the happy knowledge that the government was moving in the Mormon matter, peacefully but with impelling firmness.

Sir George Gore floated down the Missouri River as the ice floes went out in the spring of 1857, falling in with some of the officers of the Army of Utah, then getting on the move to St. Louis. Sir George visited at some length with Capt. R. B. Marcy, a portion of their conversation being about James Bridger. Bridger was a fascinating frontiersman to Sir George, being the only man in the mountains worthy of respect in his opinion; and Bridger was of great interest to Captain Marcy and other officers because he was a prominent thorn in the flesh of the Mormons, whom the officers were being sent to intimidate.

Captain Marcy was a journalist, and preserved the most interesting material in his notebooks for future use. Thus after about a year's association with Bridger, for better focus on his subject, the captain retold the Bridger-Gore love story briefly, giving what is probably the only trustworthy example extant of Bridger's forms of expression. The matter has been often repeated in paraphrase and piecemeal; but in the following, the old scout speaks through but one medium, Captain Marcy (49), and probably suffers little if any loss of idiom.

After the affair with the Mormons at Fort Bridger in 1853 (and his expedition with Sir George Gore), Bridger returned to the States "and laid his case before the authorities at Washington," says Captain Marcy, "and he was on his return when I met him (at Fort Laramie). "As may be imagined, he did not entertain the most friendly feeling for the '*Latter Day Saints*,' and he would not probably have gone very far out of his way to have *saved* their *sculps*, as he termed the savages' battle trophy.

"Bridger had been the guide, interpreter, and companion of that distinguished Irish sportsman, Sir George Gore, whose peculiar tastes led him, in 1855, to abandon the luxurious life of Europe and bury himself for over two years among the savages in the wildest and most unfrequented glens of the Rocky Mountains.

"The outfit and adventures of this titled Nimrod, conducted as they were upon the most gigantic scale, probably exceeded anything of the kind ever before attempted on this continent, and the

results of his exploits will compare favorably with the performances of Gordon Cumming in Africa.

"Some conception may be formed of the magnitude of his equipment when it is stated that his party consisted of about fifty persons, comprising secretaries, stewards, cooks, flymakers, dog tenders, hunters, servants, etc., etc. He was provided with a train of thirty wagons, besides numerous saddle horses and dogs.

"I met Sir George at St. Louis soon after his return from the mountains, and found him affable and communicative. He related to me several of his adventures with the Indians, and showed me his guns of various descriptions and calibres, suited to the destruction of all kinds of game, and upon them I observed the names of Joe Manton, Purdy, Westley Richards, and other celebrated makers.

"He informed me that during his protracted hunt he had slaughtered the enormous aggregate of forty grizzly bears, twenty-five hundred buffaloes, besides numerous elk, deer, antelope and other *small* game. He had brought back with him a host of trophies, which would be abundant vouchers for his performances on his return home.

"Some persons will probably think it is a very strange infatuation that a nobleman like Sir George, possessing an income of some \$200,000 per annum, should voluntarily withdraw from all society and retire to the wilderness among savages for two long years, exposed to all the perils and privations consequent upon such a life; but I assure the denizens of cities that he required no sympathy from them, as he was one of those enthusiastic, ardent sportsmen who derive more real satisfaction and pleasure from one day's successful hunting than can possibly be imagined by those who have never participated in this exhilarating and healthful amusement. Besides, he returned home with a renovated constitution, good health and spirits, and a new lease of perhaps ten years to his life, and, finally, he had seen something of life out of the ordinary beaten track of the great mass of other tourists.

"Bridger often spoke to me about Sir George Gore, and always commended him as a bold, dashing, and successful sportsman, a social champion, and an agreeable gentleman.

"Sir George's habit was to sleep until about 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning, when he took his bath, ate his breakfast, and set out generally alone for the day's hunt; and Bridger says it was not unusual for him to remain out until 10 o'clock at night, and he seldom returned to camp without augmenting the catalog of his exploits.

"His dinner was then ordered, to partake of which he generally extended an invitation to my friend Bridger, and after the repast was concluded, and a few glasses of wine had been drunk, he was in the habit of reading from some book, and eliciting from Bridger

his comments thereon. His favorite author was Shakespeare, which Bridger 'reckon'd was a leetle too highfalutin' for him'; moreover, he remarked that he 'rayther calculated that thar big Dutchman, Mr. *Full-stuff*, was a leetle bit too fond of lager beer,' and suggested that probably it might have been better for the old man if he had imbibed the same amount of alcohol in the more condensed medium of good old Bourbon whiskey.

"Bridger seemed deeply interested in the adventures of Baron Munchausen, but admitted after the reading was finished that 'he be dogond ef he swallered every thing that thar *Baren* Mountchawson said, and he thout he was a durn'd liar.' Yet, upon further reflection he acknowledged that some of his own experiences among the Blackfeet would be equally marvelous '*ef writ down in a book.*'

"One evening Sir George entertained his auditor by reading to him Sir Walter Scott's account of the battle of Waterloo, and afterward asked him if he did not regard that as the most sanguinary battle he had ever heard of. To which Bridger replied, 'Wall, now, Mr. Gore, that thar must 'a bin a considible of a skrimmage, dogon my skin ef it mustn't; them Britishers must 'a fit better thar than they did down to Horleans, whar Old Hickry gin um the forkedest sort o' chain-lightnin' that prehaps you ever did see in all yer born days!' And upon Sir George's expressing a little incredulity in regard to the estimate Bridger placed upon his battle, the latter added, 'You can jist go yer pile on it, Mr. Gore—you *can*, as sure as yer born.'

CHAPTER XL

WHY THE ARMY WENT TO UTAH

JAMES BRIDGER'S complaint against the Mormons was not the actuating influence which moved the government to dispatch troops to Utah, nor was it the last straw which broke the camel's back of diplomatic relations; but the small disturbance created by Bridger's story undoubtedly aided appreciably in stampeding the camel, which ended in President Buchanan's celebrated fiasco in the mountains. Just why the army was sent to Utah may be seen in a brief glance backward into the history of events.

When the Mormons fled to the valley of the Great Salt Lake in 1847 expecting to find sanctuary, the vultures of persecution followed at close range, perching ominously on the Wasatch mountain crests. Driven from the states by intolerance of their religious and other practices, the Saints had settled in this secluded nook of Mexican territory, only to be bundled back again into the inhospitable fold by the first Mexican cession of 1848.

The situation at once became anomalous, if not strained; the government of the new territory was to be administered by political appointees of the United States Government, yet the Mormon people were so intimately banded together under their ecclesiastical leaders as to make further general government of doubtful value and efficiency at the time, especially in the hands of unfriendly or unsympathetic officials.

Brigham Young, president of the Mormon Church, was governor of the people, no matter who might become the governor of the territory, hence the administration in Washington very wisely appointed him Governor of the Territory, in September, 1850. He took the oath of office in February, 1851, and became at the same time commander in chief of the territorial militia, and commissioner of Indian affairs. Outsiders were selected for the

positions of secretary of state, three justices of the United States courts, and others.

Brigham Young got along famously with his new job, but the non-Mormon functionaries went through many motions and accomplished little, largely because they were prone to busy themselves with causes that were unpopular or against the desires of the Utah people as a whole. From the resulting strife, wranglings of war arose, in which javelins of words were hurled from camp to camp in an increasing shower.

That judges were corrupt and immoral, and the Mormons were seditious and autocratic were some of the charges made. So the firebrands flew, and so passed the years with increasing bitterness, while Utah's destiny quavered in the storm. The ship of state finally blew up, as a result of depth-bombs laid by certain federal officials, who discreetly returned to the states while the fuses were sputtering.

A cosy nest had been in preparation for these bombs from the beginning in the minds of the eastern public, through the newspaper and magazine correspondents sojourning in Utah, and otherwise. The facts of occurrence were often of a kind to make good reading, especially when viewed through the vision of an unhampered writer.

At a pioneer day celebration during Brigham Young's first summer as governor, he is reported to have waxed over-eloquent in speaking of the demise of President Taylor, saying, "Zachary Taylor is dead and in hell, and I am glad of it"; and he prophesied that "any President of the United States who lifts his finger against this people shall die an untimely death and go to hell." Such items made ready reading in the East.

At the general ecclesiastical conference of the Mormons that fall, Associate Justice Perry E. Brocchus, in behalf of the Masonic fraternities of the country, was delegated to invite the people of Utah to contribute a stone to the Washington monument in Washington, D. C. The subject moved the speaker to an eloquence beyond his depth; forgetting all restraint he told the assembled Saints, in their own auditorium, that if they could not

become virtuous, and loyal to the nation, the proffered stone "had better remain in the bosom of your native mountains." Brigham Young was on his feet instantly, being the master of ceremonies at the meeting; and the bawling out that Brocchus got, while the congregation applauded, for the insults thus offered to the Mormon people, still echoes among the mountains. Of course it cost the voluble judge his job. Then a little later came Justice George P. Stiles, an apostate Mormon of Illinois, and otherwise objectionable for his lack of morals.

It happens that the territorial legislature had passed a law giving a territorial marshal jurisdiction where the federal statutes gave the United States Marshal authority. Judge Stiles fell afoul of this law, and Governor Young took a hand in the disturbance. Noticing the court records in Stiles' private law office, the governor suggested that they should have better care.

His secretary and son-in-law, H. B. Clawson, and others, took the hint, and incidentally took the court records, storing the latter in Governor Young's fireproof safe. Stiles being out of the office, the visitors proceeded to clean house, carrying some of the papers to an out-house for a conflagration. On his return to the scene, Judge Stiles considered that he had been robbed, and that the court records had been burned. Thus he went back to Washington and told the folks all about it. As newspaper copy, this, too, went very well.

That summer, June, 1856, the newspaper and official gossip generally got into the Republican National Convention against the Mormons, a plank in the platform declaring "it to be both the right and the duty of congress to prohibit those twin relics of barbarism—polygamy and slavery." About the same time, Stephen A. Douglas turned against the Saints, presumably for political gain, and ended a peroration on the subject of their alleged practices with this hypothetical sentence: "When the authentic evidence shall arrive, if it shall establish the facts which are believed to exist, it will become the duty of congress to apply the knife and cut out this loathsome, disgusting ulcer."

W. M. F. Magraw, a partner in the mail carrying contract between Independence, Missouri, and Salt Lake City, Utah, had a fine influence with the authorities in Washington, but in Salt Lake City, as a mail carrier, he was without countenance. It was too fertile a soil in which to stir up strife, this thing of a square jawed gentile carrying the mails to an isolated yet exacting colony of Mormons.

Magraw's mail contract expired early in 1856, and in attempting to renew it, he was underbid by Kimball & Company, another name for the promising Brigham Young Express, and thus a general confusion resulted. Magraw promptly drew on his political credit for an appointment as superintendent of government road construction in the West, and wrote a right racy letter (October 3, 1856) to his esteemed friend, the President of the United States, concerning affairs in Utah, as he viewed them.

There was not a vestige of law left in the territory, he wrote; and no protection to life and property, all laws and personal rights being overruled by a dangerous, despotic and damnable ecclesiastical organization; its conspiracies, in place of laws, were executed at midnight by an organized band of bravos and assassins, he continued; and the courts were converted into engines of injustice.

He felt sure the time was near when the situation would culminate in indiscriminate bloodshed, robbery, and rapine, which would speedily reduce the region to a howling wilderness. Non-Mormon lives and property were constantly in jeopardy; and ignominy and abuse were at times followed by murder; these conditions could not be rectified, he wrote, except by speedy and powerful preventives.

W. W. Drummond, an associate justice with Stiles, who is claimed to have been even more deficient in morals than his fellow judge, now steps into the limelight. He brought Mrs. Drummond with him to the territory, but an acquaintance making a social call discovered it was not the Mrs. Drummond she knew. The judge's "wife's" name has since been legion, ranging through all the

synonyms for the Magdalen. She deposited herself behind the judge's railing in court, once upon a time, and as far as the historical references to the affair go among Mormon writers, she has been there ever since.

Judge Drummond returned to the states with what reputation remained, and on March 30, 1857, wrote his resignation to the Attorney General in the form of an anathema on the Mormons. He complained that the Saints looked to Brigham Young alone for their government, and that no other law was binding upon them; there was a secret, oath-bound organization among the men of the Mormon Church, he charged, to enforce this attitude.

He averred that a group of men had been set apart to take both the lives and property of persons who opposed the Church authorities; that the records of the court had been destroyed by these people, and the federal officers were grossly insulted, harassed and annoyed, and that the American government and its chief executive were traduced, slandered and abused in the most vulgar, loathsome and wicked manner possible. He claimed that Brigham Young's instructions to the grand jury went much farther than the charges of the court.

The judge had reached the conclusion that Capt. J. W. Gunnison and party had been murdered by order of the Mormons, he said, as were his own predecessor on the bench, Judge Shaver, and the former secretary of the territory, A. W. Babbitt. He alleged in this connection that the so-called Danite band was bound to carry out such orders of destruction or forfeit their own lives. In closing his tirade he assured the Attorney General that the judiciary was treated as a farce and suggested that a non-Mormon governor be appointed to succeed Governor Young, and that the new appointee be supported by a sufficient military aid.

That the deputy clerk of the court, vacated by Judge Drummond, nailed some of the judge's specific statements as preposterous prevarications, obviously did not nullify the effect of his harangue. Indeed, there were other charges to serve as counter irritants. The newly ap-

pointed surveyor general, D. H. Burr, reached the territory in the spring of 1855, only to find, he says, that as a result of the new law creating his position, the Saints had been ordered to convey all their lands to the president of the Church, as trustee in trust.

Burr claimed that three "Danites" nearly killed one of his deputies and says his own prosecution in the territorial courts for trespass, while attending to his legal duties, had been publicly urged by the people of Utah. In his letter of August 30, 1856, Burr states that the people of Utah repudiated the authority of the United States government, and were still in open rebellion. Affairs had become so critical he was doubtful about sending his men into the field, and even feared his own life might be sacrificed before he could escape from the territory.

As if to add gasoline to the flaming ship of state, the Indian agent on the upper Platte River advised the commissioner of Indian affairs at Washington, D. C., that a large colony of Mormons had occupied lands within the boundaries of the agency, contrary to law and to his instructions. He said he was powerless because the Mormons obeyed no laws of the government, thus singing in perfect tune with the gentile chorus in Utah.

President Buchanan thus pointed out that he was confronted with the fact that all the judicial and executive officers of the territory, excepting a couple of Indian agents, and possibly one other person, had resigned and left in fear of the Mormons. He later told congress that he could not mistake the path of duty, during the congressional recess of 1857; he was bound to restore the supremacy of the laws of the nation.

Therefore he appointed a new Utah governor, Alfred Cumming, of Georgia, and a full complement of other officers; and he ordered them to Utah with a military force for their protection, and to act as a posse comitatus, if necessary, in the execution of the Utah territorial laws. He moved rapidly, and on May 28, 1857, the War Department, by Gen. Winfield Scott, ordered a hasty assembling of troops at Fort Leavenworth, and to march thence to Utah.

Twenty-five hundred men were mentioned in the order as being the least necessary for the expedition, plus the required number of officers. The big freighting firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell was engaged to transport the army with its supplies and provisions. Besides eight hundred beef cattle that were driven in a herd, three thousand two hundred and fifty oxen, three hundred and sixty men, three hundred and twelve wagons and forty-eight mules were required to handle the twelve separate trains of the firm's own. There were, in addition, several other trains of twenty-six wagons each, engaged from sub-contractors, making an enormous cavalcade.

Many celebrated plainsmen of the day were among the troops, or the freighters, as guides or assistants; and the eyes of the nation were fixed on this most spectacular posse on an alleged peaceful mission. Gen. W. S. Harney, in charge of the expedition, was withdrawn at the last moment to remain in "Bleeding" Kansas; and Gen. P. F. Smith, successor, died before getting the troops out of Fort Leavenworth. Thus Col. E. B. Alexander fell heir to the place temporarily by reason of his rank.

The letter of instructions to the commander of the forces was explicit, explaining the supposed situation in Utah somewhat in detail. The new governor, or other officers, were to have the responsibility of saying whether the army was to be used or not. Should they be unable to preserve the peace and execute the laws, the order read, and should they then make proper request on the military commander for soldiers for police duty only, it was directed that all or part of the command should be used. "In no case will you, your officers or men, attack any body of citizens whatever, except on such requisition or summons, or in sheer self-defense." Prudence, however, would lead the commander to anticipate any resistance, at any time en route, and be fully prepared to meet it, the instructions said.

Mayor A. O. Smoot, of Salt Lake City, on the way to the Missouri River, met some of the troops, who seemed to be on an unstated, or non-committal errand; but he picked up the red hot news at the river, that Governor

Young had been displaced, the Mormon mail contract had been rescinded, and that the troops were headed for Utah. Thus he hurried back to Utah and made forever famous the Tenth Pioneer Day anniversary, July 24, 1857, by delivering the stirring news to the Saints assembled in Big Cottonwood Canyon.

Volumes have been written in attempts to describe adequately the general effect on the Mormon people, who had just passed through one of the worst years of their public history, in the perishing of so many of the hand cart emigrants; and who were now face to face with a most calamitous condition. But Brigham Young was the coolest of them all, for a while at least, and he calmly got his plans under way to resist the United States Army to the end.

Liars had reported that the Mormon people had committed treason, he complained publicly; and upon those lies the President had ordered the troops to aid in officering the territory. He said that if the oncoming territorial officers were like many of their predecessors, as they probably were, they were "poor, miserable blacklegs, broken down political hacks, robbers and whoremongers, men that are not fit for civilized society."

He felt that he could not bear such "cursed treatment" and urged the Mormon people to live their religion, and all would be well; otherwise they would be shorn down, especially in case they undertook to shield their own property. "Before I will suffer what I have in times gone by, there shall not be one building, nor one foot of lumber, nor a stick, nor a tree, nor a particle of grass or hay that will burn, left in reach of our enemies. I am sworn, if driven to extremity, to utterly lay waste, in the name of Israel's God" (57).

Emissaries were hurried to Europe to recall all missionaries; and the Mormon settlers in Nevada and southern California were called back to Utah for the ordeal of defending the people, though many of these settlers returned at tremendous personal sacrifices of property. The Mormon militia, mustering probably six thousand men, began intensive training and defensive

activities, while the faithful Mormon women and children devoted themselves unselfishly to the work of the fields, the gardens, and to the making of clothing for the prospective winter campaign against the United States Army in the Wasatch mountains. Sad hearted they all toiled and prayed, trusting in Brigham Young and keeping their powder dry. Meanwhile the vultures of persecution filled the air with their fearful, gluttonous figures, as it seemed to the excited Saints.

CHAPTER XLI

THE BATTLE OF FORT BRIDGER

THE Mormon War of 1857-1858 was the one military campaign in the history of the nation in which the United States troops took a sound thrashing. They suffered all the discomforts and humiliation of defeat, though it was due to the plugging of their guns with commands and countermands, the war being mostly a war of words. A war machine, charged with sufficient power to ram down the Wasatch mountain barriers, was allowed to curl itself up like a soft wire in contact with the Mormon opposition; and it got itself straightened out only after the Mormon militia surrendered the keys to Echo Canyon.

While thus waiting outside in the cold for the keys, the various military units and supply trains sprawled aimlessly about Fort Bridger environs like the lost tribes of Israel; and the Mormon tacticians and guerillas, aided by a long and vicious winter, plunged the federal troops into a condition of destitution which army historians would fain forget. Thousands of work cattle and mules were captured, scores of richly laden supply wagons were burned, and much additional clothing and provisions were confiscated, while the troops and bull-whackers, facing freezing and starvation as a consequence, were allowed to explode no heavier artillery in retaliation than a windproof match or a bull-whacker's vocabulary.

James Bridger was employed to guide and assist the troops, having been engaged by Lieut. P. W. I. Plympton, acting assistant quartermaster, as guide at five dollars a day, at Fort Laramie on July 16, 1857; and while the old scout placed himself at the head of the columns with much pride and expectation, he nevertheless descended from his lofty height to a position of abject humiliation, along with the despoiled troopers and teamsters, subsequently. He would doubtless have paid well for the

privilege of thus heading the United States troops against his old enemies, the Mormons, yet he was soon in a position to condole with the Sioux Indian allies of the whites before the Arikara villages thirty-five years before, having experienced more of their disgust at the white man's mode of warfare.

The army was without a designated head until about September 1, when Col. Albert Sidney Johnston was placed in general command, after practically the entire command had stretched itself disjointedly across the plains ahead of him. This difficulty and delay in securing a commander suggested that the authorities may have been attempting to induce a Balaam to go forth to curse a Mormon-Israelitish nation; and before the army reached its destination, its officers were many times aware of being astride Balaam's celebrated ass.

The first flareup of the native instincts of the ass was on the Platte, where the Cheyenne Indians attempted to pick off the eight hundred beeves from the caravan (55) in evident retribution for the white man's toll of buffalo. Lieutenant Plympton thereupon engaged James Bridger to take the fractious beast by the bridle bits and lead it through the swarming hornets. Bridger had just returned from an early spring visit to Bridger's ferry over the Platte about fifty-five miles upriver from Fort Laramie (Orin Junction), and was arranging to do business with the troops, though not as a guide. The old scout had just purchased a major interest in the ferry, which was in competition with, or a direct successor to, a Mormon ferry, at a place where business was to be had chiefly during high water in early summer.

It is apparent that Bridger aided the first of the supply trains across his ferry and up the Sweetwater through South Pass, and that he returned to assist others along the line, for Captain Marcy found him at Fort Laramie about August 18. Becoming very much attached to each other, Captain Marcy and Colonel Bridger were much together thereafter. At a later date Bridger became guide for Colonel Alexander and the Tenth Infantry, who were at Fort Laramie early in September, and later still he

accompanied Col. Albert Sidney Johnston on the final leg of the journey, if the extremely meager service record of the old scout has been properly unfolded to us.

Capt. Stewart Van Vliet, with a swift chariot in the form of a plains wagon drawn by six mules and attended by a competent military escort of some fifty men, was dispatched ahead to Utah to arrange a domicile for the troops, both in the Salt Lake valley, and in the hearts of the Mormon people; he was to contract for needful materials and supplies, and with a well oiled palm was to stroke the rising bristles in the necks of the suspicious Saints.

Arriving at Hams Fork near Fort Bridger, his mules developed unmistakable signs of their nativity in the Balaam breed. They all balked consistently, with a trusty Mormon Cossack at each animal's bridle bit. The guerilla chieftain informed the captain that his approach to the Mormon governor of Utah must be in a manner prescribed by that dignitary, namely: he must go alone, disarmed, and under a Mormon armed escort.

Leaving the balky asses at Hams Fork, where the supply trains soon began to seek yardage under Van Vliet's Lieutenant Deshler, Captain Van Vliet thus appeared before Brigham Young at Salt Lake City on September 12 and 13, apparently stripped of all his military authority and prestige. Both men promptly laid their cards on the table and jawed about the jackpot, which really did not exist, as each tried to prove to the other.

The captain explained that the army was not coming to arrest Brigham Young, which was one of the latter's pet fears; nor were they to take up any matter of past history, but that President Buchanan had established a military department in Utah, as had been done in many other states; and that, in principle, the money spent in the territory and the prestige added to its government would be a great advantage to the people. He assured the Mormon leader that Governor Cumming's intentions were kindly and peaceful; but that if the troops were opposed, it would be only a matter of time before the

Mormons would be overpowered, and would have much to answer for.

Brigham Young refused to be comforted, however, insisting vehemently that there wasn't any such animal as that described by Van Vliet. The Mormons had been persecuted, murdered, and robbed, by mobs and state authorities, he stated, and he proposed to resist further persecution at the onset. He insisted determinedly that the troops now on the way should not enter Utah; and that if they forced their way in, they would find Utah deserted, and its lands laid waste.

There was said to be an abundance of the supplies the captain needed, but the militant Mormon leader assured him that none of it would be sold at any price for the use of the army. Nevertheless, the obedient captain, carrying out instructions from what he regarded as a higher authority, examined Tooele and Rush valleys as prospective quarters for the army, reaching the conclusion that these valleys were little or no better for subsisting the stock than the region about Fort Bridger. He then departed under Mormon escort on September 14.

The following day Brigham Young issued his celebrated proclamation of war. "We are invaded by a hostile force, who are evidently assailing us to accomplish our overthrow and destruction," the declaration echoed after Van Vliet. For twenty-five years the Mormons had trusted government officials, only to be derided, insulted and betrayed, Young declared; their houses had been plundered and burned, their fields laid waste, and their principal men butchered, and the people driven into the wilderness.

The government had not sent a committee to investigate the charges and the Mormons were being condemned unheard, he complained. The authorities back of the army had accepted the word of anonymous letter writers, corrupt officials and "hireling priests and howling editors, who prostitute the truth for filthy lucre's sake." The law of self-preservation required that the Mormons make a determined opposition, he declared, hence as governor he "forbid all armed forces of every description

from coming into this territory under any pretense whatever"; declaring "that all the forces in said territory would hold themselves in readiness to march at a moment's notice, to repel any and all such invasion, and that martial law is hereby declared to exist," on September 15, 1857.

Brigham Young's presentiment of a United States army in Utah, which had haunted him for ten years, was becoming an active reality, and it found him in a fever for a desperate display, with the solid support of his people and all their resources. These facts, carefully appraised, together with the general dangers of a crusade against religious zealously as they seemed to be presented, were communicated by Captain Van Vliet from the camp on Hams Fork, on September 16, to his official superiors, and on the 17th he resumed his march eastward, with a small escort.

The Mormon scouts were on his heels, however, and on September 21, about which time Van Vliet was conferring with Colonel Alexander and the vanguard of troops near Devil's Gate on the Sweetwater, Col. Richard F. Burton and a band of Mormon guerilla scouts were in the offing taking notes. William A. Hickman, another guerilla leader, had been detailed to gather in the animals and men from the F. W. Lander road surveying party then on the Sweetwater, and he reports his failure as due to the absence of the animals desired. Hickman also states (46) that Burton tried repeatedly to cut out some of the troopers' stock, but failed. Nevertheless, Burton shadowed the troops, keeping his superiors apprised of every movement.

At the same time army scouts were examining the Green River country ahead, and keeping Colonel Alexander in touch with the supply trains. Shortly after meeting Captain Van Vliet, however, word came that the Mormons were menacing the isolated troops and valuable supply trains at Hams Fork, within forty miles of Mormon headquarters at Fort Bridger. Thereupon, Colonel Alexander, placing himself at the head of eight companies of the Tenth Infantry, hastened on ahead, leaving a part of

the Tenth to guard the supply trains and the beef herd that had been with him.

Forcing marches night and day, through South Pass, over the Sandys and Green River, he arrived at Hams Fork and established Camp Winfield on September 28. Storm warnings preceded this movement, however, and great consternation spread over the Mormons at Fort Bridger and Fort Supply. Surely Colonel Alexander meant to force his passage through Echo Canyon at once, in violation of every paragraph of Brigham Young's proclamation of war, not yet delivered to the enemy!

Swiftly the Mormon settlements were swept of their valuables and portables, every article of value except the turnips in the ground being loaded onto wagons or pack horses and sent toward Salt Lake with the families of the residents; and as if to furnish a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night to the fleeing families, their own homes were set on fire by themselves, both at Fort Supply and at Fort Bridger. So fearful were they that the United States Army was making a sort of charge, that the forts were not left for even the temporary convenience of their own militiamen, being reduced by flames about September 27 or 28 as the last of the families got away. Captain Bullock was at Fort Supply and Captain Callister at Fort Bridger in tents when Captain Ginn arrived (56).

Daniel H. Wells, "Lieutenant General Commanding Nauvoo Legion" (as the Mormon militia was called from its inception in Nauvoo, Illinois) had advanced from his headquarters in Echo Canyon to Fort Bridger on the rising wave of resentment at Colonel Alexander's movement, and the moment Alexander halted on Hams Fork, Lot Smith and Lewis Robinson were ordered to deliver Brigham Young's ultimatum, so there would be no misunderstanding about the desirability of a social call in Salt Lake by the army that fall. A contagion of goose-flesh attacked the couriers, however, and the precious missives were delivered by an accommodating Mexican (57) on September 30.

Not knowing the officer's name, Brigham Young had addressed the "Officer Commanding the Forces Now In-

vading Utah Territory," citing the Utah law allowing a governor to hold office until his successor was appointed and qualified, and declaring himself still to be governor. He inclosed a copy of his Proclamation of War, and directed the officer to "retire forthwith from the territory by the same route you entered. Should you deem this impracticable, and you prefer to remain until spring in the vicinity of your present encampment, Black's Fork or Green River, you can do so in peace and unmolested on condition that you deposit your arms and ammunition with Lewis Robinson, quartermaster general of the territory, and leave in the spring as soon as the condition of the roads will permit you to march; and should you fall short of provisions, they can be furnished you, upon making proper application therefor" (57).

Colonel Alexander had for some time been without orders and was in a quandary as to the future, but he obviously had no doubt about the spuriousness of the orders received through the Mexican from Brigham Young. He thus replied on October 2, informing the apparently invincible Mormon leader that his communications would be held for the senior commanding officer. "In the meantime," he continued, "I have only to say that these troops are here by the orders of the President of the United States, and their future movements will depend entirely upon the orders issued by competent military authority."

This was the defy the Mormons had feared so intensely that it had at last come to pass. They had previously, however, digested general plans and were ready to retaliate in their own way; the enemy must not pass! Colonel Alexander's note to Brigham Young could not have reached Fort Bridger until October 3 at the earliest, yet at four o'clock that afternoon Major Lot Smith, at the head of a guerilla band of forty-three picked men, set out toward Green River with a license to do everything conceivable to hamper the oncoming troop and supply trains excepting to commit murder—that might incense the invaders to the point of arms!

But Fort Bridger was inhospitable, offering no shelter,

and being short of troops as well, hence General Wells of the Mormon troops hurried back to Cache Cave in Echo Canyon to take charge of the canyon fortifications, and direct the field forces, while keeping within reach of his leader in Salt Lake City. Captain Van Vliet had made it clear to the Mormons that the United States troops were forbidden to use their arms except in actual self-defense, thus the guerillas knew their limit. The plans were epitomized in General Wells' letter of instruction to Major Joseph Taylor, dated October 4, Taylor having been directed to intercept any troops or trains that had passed down Bear River toward Fort Hall.

"On ascertaining the locality or the route of the troops," the letter ran in part, being presumably the same instructions as that carried by Major Lot Smith, "proceed at once to annoy them in every possible way. Use every exertion to stampede their animals and set fire to their trains. Burn the whole country before them and on their flanks. Keep them from sleeping by night surprises; blockade the roads by falling trees and destroying river fords where you can. Watch for opportunities to set fire to the grass on their windward, so as, if possible, to envelop their trains. Leave no grass before them that can be burned. Keep your men concealed as much as possible, and guard against surprise. Keep scouts out at all times and communications open with Colonel Burton, Major McAllister, and O. P. Rockwell, who are operating in the same way. Keep me advised daily of your movements, and every step the troops take, and in what direction. P. S.—If the troops have not passed, or have turned in that direction, follow in their rear, and continue to annoy them, burning any trains they may leave. Take no life, but destroy their trains and stampede or drive away their animals at every opportunity."

But the luckless bearer of this burning missive was captured by the army scouts and his instructions disseminated among the men of the army for their guidance (45).

Orrin Porter Rockwell was a Mormon meteor for night riding, and had sped eastward on the emigrant trail from Fort Bridger ahead of Major Lot Smith, with a cruising



JOHNSTON'S ARMY, arriving at Fort Bridger, November, 1857, piloted by James Bridger. These troops wintered at Fort Bridger en route to Utah, in the so-called Mormon War. (60)

party, reaching Pacific Springs while the remnant of Colonel Alexander's Tenth Infantry were there with the beef cattle, and the corn train, according to Captain Ginn (56). Rockwell adroitly crept behind the night guard and stampeded the mules.

For the moment it seemed as if the disappearing mules had suddenly recognized their ancestry as tracing to Balaam's ass; but when the waning clatter of hoofs ceased about three miles down the road, the stable call was ordered by the buglers. The mules heard the call, recognized it as a call to feed, and came galloping back, bringing with them the entire Mormon mount with empty saddles.

At the Little Sandy crossing the next night Rockwell sought to steal a remount, or get his own stock back; creeping along a dark ravine near the camp of the Tenth Infantry, they came upon fifteen riding horses, saddled and bridled in readiness for some maneuver. Quickly stealing these animals, Rockwell hastened with his men to the temporary Mormon base on Big Sandy. But when daylight came the Mormons were dumbfounded to note that the fifteen stolen mounts belonged to another Mormon guerilla band, which for a very good reason had not yet reported in.

Realizing their exposure, the Tenth made some long drives to rejoin the troops ahead quickly. Ginn states that besides the seven supply trains on Hams Fork (Camp Winfield), each containing about twenty-six wagons, there was one near Big Sandy crossing, one or two at Green River, and another, Simpson's, between Green River and Hams Fork. Encamping at Big Sandy, the Tenth remnant moved on in the night, passing through Simpson's train about midnight, Ginn claims. That night the two trains on Green River were burned by Lot Smith, and at the nooning the next day, Simpson's train went up in flames.

Smith himself tells the story (45) with much satisfaction and many details, insofar as he thought the exploits were to his credit at least. From Fort Bridger on the evening of October 3, he rode all night. At daybreak of the 4th he met a train in charge of Wagon-Master Rankin,

whom he directed to turn around and return to the States. The orders were ostensibly obeyed, but as Smith passed on, Rankin faced his train southwestward again. Thereupon the Mormon troops intercepted him, took possession of his freight, and turned his stock out under Mormon guard.

Smith was chagrined at this first failure, and directed Captain Haight, with twenty men, to intercept the Tenth remnant and capture the mules that fled from Rockwell at the call to corn by the buglers. But the Tenth was on the move, using its stock, and Haight remained empty-handed. Smith and twenty-three men proceeded to the stream, crossing near the mouth of the Sandy, where his scouts had reported a train encamped. Halting for an early supper, Smith covered the last fourteen miles after dark, discovering to his surprise that there were two trains instead of one.

Smith claims the teamsters were drunk, but nevertheless he waited until after midnight to make his attack, when fewer men would be awake, claiming that drunk men might not readily recall their instructions to refrain from shooting the Mormons. Approaching the camp fire where a few men stood, Smith's line of mounts echeloned from sight in the darkness, appearing like an infinite number of men. Wagon-master Dawson and his men were ordered to surrender their guns, and then to obtain their personal effects from the wagons, as the wagons were to be burned.

"For God's sake, don't burn the trains," Captain Dawson pleaded, but Major Smith replied piously, "It is for His sake that I am going to burn them," and he ganged the bull-whackers under a guard, while he and his men helped themselves to suits and overcoats which they needed. An Indian requested "two wagon covers for a lodge, some flour and some soap. I filled his order and he went away much elated," Smith says, who also ordered Dawson to assist the Mormons to find and obtain a goodly supply of provisions, demanding especially plenty of sugar and coffee.

A non-Mormon member of Smith's gang was then

directed by Smith to assist him in applying the torches to the wagons, "as I thought it was proper for the Gentiles to spoil the Gentiles." Smith and his band then departed, heavily laden with extra clothing, arms and provisions, leaving the forlorn bull-whackers and guards to enjoy the bonfires.

Coming upon Simpson's bull train about noon the next day, about twelve miles west of the Big Sandy crossing, Smith surprised and readily captured and disarmed the drivers who were snoozing beneath the wagons at a noon-ing. Simpson and a few attendants were at a watering place a half mile distant with all the stock, and Smith with a few men turned in that direction to complete his job. But when Smith demanded Simpson's side arms he indignantly refused, daring Smith to take them if he thought it safe.

"Captain Simpson was the bravest man I met during the campaign," says Smith. "He was son-in-law of Mr. Majors, a large contractor for government freighting." Simpson spoke his mind freely when they arrived at the wagons and found his men disarmed and under guard, declaring that Smith had taken an unfair advantage and was making unreasonable demands. Thus the outraged wagon-master induced Smith to release two wagon loads of provisions, with ample bull power, to carry his men back to the states. Smith then segregated some additional supplies from the wagons for the use of the Mormons, and fired the wagons.

Col. Wm. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill), in his autobiography, claims to have been with Capt. Lew Simpson with the stock at the watering place when Smith drew up and requested the side arms of the party. Cody's narrative, however, being a man's recollections of the doings of a lad of eleven, seems to represent a lively team of memory and imagination on a long tether from the hand of the historian; but his narrative being uncramped by a tight rein, makes good reading.

He says many of the wagons contained bacon, lard, powder and other inflammable materials, making a spectacular conflagration. The bills of lading for trains Num-

ber 5, 9, and 10, thus destroyed by Smith, carried one and a half tons of ham, forty-six tons of bacon, eighty-five tons of flour, four and a half tons of coffee, three-fourths of a ton of sugar, six tons of soap, four tons of hard bread, and beans, candles, molasses and dried fruit in immense quantities, including thirty-five tons of desiccated vegetables (45), the memory of which haunted the starving troops throughtout that whole miserable winter at Fort Bridger.

Smith came upon a few extra wagons a short distance away, belonging to the sutler, presumably William A. Carter, and sent them up in flames for good measure (10). Meanwhile Hickman, Rockwell, Burton and others were carrying out instructions to make life for the army just one hard thing after another. Hickman alone got to the Mormon lines at Fort Bridger with two hundred and seventy-five head of cattle, and a large number of horses and mules. But the Mormon scouts did their most withering work on the morale of the troops and teamsters, by promising immunity from attack, and plenty of food and clothing, if they would offer no resistance, and make matters easy for the guerillas.

CHAPTER XLII

ARMY LEASES FORT BRIDGER LANDS

THINGS looked pretty black to Col. E. B. Alexander. Winter was at hand, and an encampment must be selected immediately, and the troops and wagons conveyed thereto. Green River valley had been devastated of forage, and it was infested by a species of savages which in his mind were worse than the primitive red men on a rampage. To crown his griefs with thorns he complained that "no information of the position or intentions of the commanding officer has reached me."

Calling a council of his leading officers, and his guide, James Bridger, their situation was reviewed at some length; and the avenues through which they might extricate themselves were surveyed. Bitter Creek valley east of Green River offered a semblance of sanctuary, and ample pasturage; and the bottoms at Henry's Fork offered similar seclusion for establishing themselves and subsisting and guarding their remaining stock. But the greater problem of human subsistence and creature comforts could not be attained nearer than Fort Hall, outside of enemy territory.

This council was in session on October 10; and on October 11, Camp Winfield was vacated, half-heartedly, dejectedly, and with many misgivings in favor of Fort Hall. Heavy snowfall and extremely severe weather descended upon them in a few hours; and it became obvious that they were astride Balaam's ass again. Their livestock had dwindled both in numbers and in condition; and this circumstance aided the guerillas in delaying progress, the guerillas being exceptionally active.

Both the officers and enlisted men, and the civilian teamsters began to lose spirit, many privates, several bullwhackers, and a few officers, whose terms were expiring, being driven by hunger and hardship to desert on promise from the Mormons of free passage to Utah or to Cali-

fornia, with ample food and clothing. Colonel Alexander simply had to gain relief, which came in a measure by venting his feelings in a letter to Brigham Young, dated October 12.

It was painstaking and lengthy. "You have resorted to open hostilities, and of a kind, permit me to say, far beneath the usages of civilized warfare, and only resorted to by those who are conscious of inability to resist by more honorable means, by authorizing persons under your control, some of the very citizens, doubtless, whom you have called to arms, to burn the grass, apparently with the intention of starving a few beasts, and hoping that men would starve after them. Citizens of Utah, acting, I am bound to believe, under your authority, have destroyed trains containing public stores, with a similar inhumane purpose of starving the army."

Thus for several heated paragraphs the Colonel threw back the cloak of diplomacy to bare his inner feelings. It was just the kind of letter Brigham Young enjoyed receiving and answering it would seem, for he wrote at still greater length on October 16th in reply, his missive blazing with sarcasm, satire and ridicule.

"If you persist in your attempt to permanently locate an army in this territory, contrary to the wishes and constitutional rights of the people therein, and with a view to aid the administration in their unhallowed efforts to palm their corrupt officials upon us, and to protect them and the black-legs, black-hearted scoundrels, whore-masters and murderers, as was the sole intention in sending you and your troops here, you will have to meet a mode of warfare against which your tactics furnish you no information."

This is but a specimen paragraph of a score (45). Also, "By virtue of my office as governor of the territory of Utah, I command you to marshal your troops and leave this territory. . . . We do not wish to destroy the life of any human being, but on the contrary we ardently desire to preserve the lives and liberties of all, so far as it may be in our power. Neither do we wish for the property of the United States, notwithstanding they justly owe us millions."

John Taylor, an Apostle in the Mormon Church, had occasion to write to Captain Marcy on October 21st, saying in part: "But, say you, have you counted the cost? Have you considered the wealth and power of the United States, and the fearful odds against you? Yes. And here let me inform you that, if necessitated, we would as soon meet one hundred thousand as one thousand, and if driven to the necessity, will burn every house, tree, shrub, rail, every patch of grass, and stack of straw and hay, and flee to the mountains. You will then obtain a barren, desolate wilderness, but will not have conquered the people, and the same principle in regard to other property will be carried out. If this people have to burn their property to save it from the hands of legalized mobs,

they will see to it that their enemies shall be without fuel; they will haunt them by day and by night. Such is, in part, our plan. The \$300,000 worth of our property destroyed already in Green River County (Forts Bridger and Supply) is only a faint sample of what will be done throughout the territory" (45).

These plans of Brigham Young were deeply drilled into the hearts of the Mormon people, who would, of course, have complied with them to the letter, on their leader's instructions.

Colonel Alexander had an unlimited amount of ginger with which to correspond with Brigham Young, but on the road he soon gave out; in nine days he was but thirty-five miles from Camp Winfield. There came a messenger from Colonel Johnston, near South Pass, directing their return to an encampment two or three miles below Fort Bridger on Black's Fork. Doggedly the troops made their way to this point, which was to become Camp Scott, so pitiful in military history, dating from their arrival on November 2 and 3.

The messenger that brought the orders for Alexander's return also appears to have carried instructions for James Bridger to proceed eastward on the Overland trail to meet Colonel Johnston and party. Bridger's service record shows that on October 26 he was transferred to Capt. John H. Dickerson, assistant quartermaster, but actually employed by Albert Sidney Johnston, colonel of the Second Cavalry, as guide at five dollars a day.

There is no other direct reference known to Bridger's activities at this time, thus we cannot follow him as closely as we might wish. An indirect reference appears in the Journal of Col. Philip St. Geo. Cooke, under date of November 6, near the Three Crossings of the Sweetwater, where "the guide, who had lately passed there, was relentless in pronouncing there was no grass; . . . but as he promised grass and shelter two miles farther, we marched on."

Gen. Fitz-John Porter says in this connection (89), "Near the Rocky Mountains snowstorms began to overtake us, but Bridger, the faithful and experienced guide, ever on the alert, would point in time to the 'snow-boats,'

which, like balloons, sailing from the snow-capped mountains, warned us of storms; and would hasten to a good and early camp in time for shelter before the tempest broke upon us. At the South Pass a cold and driving snowstorm barred progress for a few days, but permitted the gathering of trains, which, assured of protection and of intelligent control, and encouraged by the cheerful words and bearing of our commander, moved on with renewed life."

After conferring with the commander of the army of Utah, and with Col. Philip St. George Cooke, who, with the territorial officers, were considerably behind Colonel Johnston, Bridger and Captain Dickerson hastened ahead again to Fort Bridger to look the ground over for the winter encampment. Bridger's lands about Fort Bridger, as surveyed and filed on in 1853-1854, afforded all the space and facilities needed by the army, and the following lease was drawn up and executed as dated (52).

"Articles of agreement made and entered into this eighteenth (18th) day of November, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-seven (1857), between James Bridger (for himself and Lewis [sic] Vasquez), of the State of Missouri, of the first part, and Capt. John H. Dickerson, assistant quartermaster, U. S. Army, on behalf of the United States, of the second part.

"This agreement witnesseth that the said party of the first part, for and in consideration of promises hereinafter made by the said party of the second part, on behalf of the United States, leases for a term of ten years, a tract of land consisting of (3,898 A., 2 R.), three thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight acres and two roods, situated in Green River County, Utah Territory, and is the same tract that is described in the plat hereunto annexed and signed by the two contracting parties, which plat in lines, words and figures is a true copy of the original. The said party of the first part grants the free use of Fort Bridger, and all the timber, wood, stone, and whatever may be found above the ground or below the ground within the limits of said tract of land, for any purposes to which the officers of the United States Government may wish to appropriate them.

"The payments hereinafter promised to be made by the said party of the second part, on behalf of the United States, to commence whenever and so soon as the said party of the first part establishes his title to the said tract of land to the satisfaction of the quartermaster-general of the U. S. Army, or whenever the

attorney-general of the United States shall pronounce the title good.

"The said party of the second part promises, on behalf of the United States, to pay to the said party of the first part the sum of \$600 per annum for the foregoing specified uses of said tract of land.

"It is understood and agreed upon by the two contracting parties that any buildings that shall have been erected by the United States Government on said tract of land, and shall remain standing at the expiration of this lease, shall descend freely and fully to the said party of the first part.

"It is further understood and agreed upon by the two contracting parties that the United States Government, through its agents, shall have the privilege at any time within the period of this lease of purchasing said tract of land by paying the said party of the first part the sum of \$10,000.

"This contract to be null and void three months after the said party of the first part shall have been duly notified by the quartermaster-general of the U. S. Army, or by his agent, that it was the intention of the United States Government to discontinue the lease of said tract of land.

"In witness we have hereunto set our hands and affixed our seals this day and year first above written."

[SEAL]

JAMES (his x mark) BRIDGER,

JNO. H. DICKERSON,

Captain and Assistant Quartermaster, U. S. Army.

In Presence of:

A. T. A. TORBERT,

Second Lieutenant, Fifth Infantry, U. S. Army.

CHAS. D. SCHMIDT,

Clerk, Quartermaster's Department.

For a description of this tract, see Chapter XXXVII. It is obvious that Bridger had the survey plat in his possession on this occasion, from which fact it is reasonable to assume that he had looked ahead to some such arrangement as was made with the army officers.

Gen. A. S. Johnston's biographer (89) mentions Bridger, his information originating chiefly in members of this expedition, particularly his subject. "Fort Bridger itself was only the ruins of a trading post, belonging to the adventurous and large-hearted James Bridger. 'Major'

Bridger, as he was called, was a fine specimen of his class, the early pioneer, who was at once hunter, trapper, herdsman and trader."

If Balaam's asses prostrated themselves all about Colonel Alexander on his attempted journey up Hams Fork toward Fort Hall, the vultures of misery swooped continually over Colonel Johnston and Colonel Cooke, screeching their terrifying calls of death into their horror-filled ears. The snow grew deeper and the weather colder; and the animals grew slower and weaker, and died so numerously that instead of the campsites being surrounded by grazing animals they were circled with carcasses.

Colonel Cooke overtook Colonel Johnston's supply train on November 19, just before they dragged their weary parties into Camp Scott. Cooke's journal is an epistle of misery, while Johnston was evidently unable to write his experiences. Cooke lost one hundred and forty-four horses out of a total of two hundred and seventy-eight, due to starvation and freezing. Other animals belonging to both Cooke's and Johnston's units had fallen down by scores, joining their predecessors of the breed of Balaam, in refusing to bear their masters on an unworthy errand, or on a worthy mission that was being performed in the wrong way.

A comparative few of even Balaam's asses remained alive among the army's stock, but it is evident that Captain Marcy drew these when he started to Fort Massachusetts, New Mexico, for foodstuffs on November 24. It was essential that he make haste, and be certain of completing his errand, if the troops were to ward off starvation or great suffering. Thus forty enlisted men, twenty mountaineers, and two supposedly competent guides (Jim Baker and Tim Goodale) were selected, the party requiring nearly one hundred and twenty animals, including sixty-six pack mules.

For the last time that fateful winter, Balaam's asses led their riders and drivers into a wilderness of snow, exhaustion and starvation from which they were rescued by the merest chance, averting total annihilation for the

entire party. Instead of following an almost snowless route at low altitude by way of Fort Uncompahgre and in a southwesterly circuit to Taos, New Mexico, on a much used trail, the balky brutes bore their riders directly into the broadside of the Rocky Mountains up Gunnison River.

By sheer accident they penetrated Cochetopa Pass, and got couriers ahead with a call for help, arriving at the end of two months instead of one, greatly decimated in strength and equipment. To spare ourselves the grief of narrating all their troubles, they reached Fort Bridger with their precious food on June 9, 1858, as the army was leaving for Utah, the land of plenty, under a meal ticket arrangement with the Mormons. But the experiences of those who endured the winter at Fort Bridger (Camp Scott) cannot be so freely passed over in justice to them and to the subject of this biography.

The cattle and many of the horses and mules remaining alive were driven over to Henry's Fork, where an auxiliary encampment was established, some even being taken to Bitter Creek bottoms, though a village of two thousand or more Shoshone Indians under Chief Washakie, wintering at the Green River ferries (55), were utilizing much of the stock range. And the building of temporary lodges, and the preparation of wood for fuel, together with many minor chores, kept every one busy.

Fort Bridger, beloved spot of the old mountaineer who gave it his name, was ravished beyond recognition by the jealous paramour who flung her in ruins at the feet of her old master. Only a scar on the landscape, in the shape of a rectangle of fire-stained walls of stone, was left above ground, and this feature was not of Bridger's building. It had been an errand of much promise, for Bridger to lead three thousand fighting men toward South Pass, but here was sackcloth and ashes at the journey's end! To the army officers, however, there was no sentiment bestowed upon the place, and its scanty utility, like that of other features of the valley, was overworked.

"HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF UTAH.

*"Camp Scott (near Fort Bridger, Black's Fork, G. R.),
November 30, 1857.*

"MAJ. J. McDOWELL,

"Assistant Adjutant-General Headquarters of the Army.

" . . . The Mormons, before they retired, burned the buildings in and about Fort Bridger, and also Fort Supply on Smith's Fork, twelve miles hence, and destroyed the grain, and, as far as they could, other crops at that place. Fort Bridger, so-called, is a high, well-built, strong stone wall, inclosing a square of one hundred feet, and has been appropriated for the storage of the supplies for the army.

"The addition of two lunettes, now being constructed, one on the southwest corner and the other on the northeast corner of a stone inclosure adjoining the main one, but not so high, will make it defensible by a small force, and a safe place of deposit for the public property that may be left when the army advances. . . .

"With great respect, your obedient servant,

"A. S. JOHNSTON,

"Colonel Second Cavalry, Commanding."

A little later Captain Dickerson transmitted the lease for Fort Bridger to Washington, by the following letter:

"CAMP SCOTT, UTAH.

"December 21, 1857.

"MAJ. GEN. THOS. S. JESUP,

"Quartermaster-General, U. S. Army.

"Sir: I forward herewith a lease of a tract of land claimed by James Bridger. He bases his claim to it on some Mexican or Spanish law, somewhat similar to the pre-emption laws of the United States. I think it exceedingly doubtful whether his title is good, but the contract is so drawn that no payment is to be made until he establishes his title. I have leased the property in order to prevent heavy reclamations on the government for loss or destruction of private property in case his title is good.

"There will most probably be a permanent post established in this immediate vicinity and the tract leased would be essential to it for wood, grazing and procuring hay.

"I will in a few days make and forward to you a survey for a government reserve embracing the timbered and grazing lands.

"I am, General, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JNO. H. DICKERSON,

"Captain, Acting Assistant Quartermaster."

CHAPTER XLIII

BRIDGER ACCOMPANIES TROOPS TO UTAH

JAMES BRIDGER, employed as a guide at five dollars a day, was of great value to the soldiers who fought cold and hunger at Camp Scott and Fort Bridger through the winter of 1857-1858. They were mostly inexperienced tenderfeet, while he was an expert of unlimited resource in the craft of the frontiersman. They had never wintered in the mountains before; while he had known no other home since he became a man. They had never been domiciled in a tent for more than a vacation period, while he had spent about twenty of his thirty-four mountain winters in skin lodges, dugouts, or log shelters of his own making. They had never subsisted without flour, vegetables and fruit, while his only food for many months of each year had been fresh meat.

They had never wintered their livestock on mountain forage alone, while he had pastured hundreds of animals on snow-covered ranges, and knew the range lands as does the stockman of today. To them the place was a cruel, inhospitable wilderness; to him it was home, and nearly every circumstance a familiar experience. Chief Washakie and two thousand Shoshone tribesmen at the crossing of the Green had no particular difficulty that winter; and James Bridger formed a most essential link between the primitive red man and the civilized man, by which the latter was lifted somewhat above the privations and suffering that must otherwise have been endured.

Canvas covers made wings on the naked walls of Fort Bridger, under which much property was stored; and tents of skins with central fireplaces formed cosy homes for hundreds of men. Dugouts or excavations in the ground, covered with a stormproof superstructure of logs and mud-plaster, formed the winter homes of most of the officers and the civilian officials.

The food supply was carefully rationed so that no one

would suffer unduly. The cattle and horses remaining alive were pastured on Henry's Fork and Bitter Creek bottoms; but as soon as the best of them had been conditioned they were slaughtered, and the meat jerked or dried out by fire, mountain style. In this manner the limited grazing range, not occupied by Indians, was conserved, and the bulk of the meat supply prepared before the severest of the winter arrived.

Two or three hundred new recruits were enlisted from the personnel of the supply trains, and all troops were drilled regularly, and were kept busy in many ways. A number of minor expeditions were sent out, whose destination and business in a few cases is briefly told by General Porter (89):

"Dispatches via Fort Laramie went to the government, and an expedition through Bridger's Pass and along Lodge Pole Creek was also sent with letters, with the view of testing the practicability and utility of this route, which was some seventy miles shorter. An expedition was also sent into the Snake Indian country to quiet the Indians, and prevent their employment by the Mormons, and to induce traders to bring cattle and horses to camp. These expeditions were all fruitful of good results.

"The success of these expeditions through Bridger's Pass led in the spring to the opening by the Sixth Infantry of the route up Lodge Pole Creek, through Bridger's Pass and down Bitter Creek; and that summer, as the road was shorter, easier, and better for grass, the Overland Stage Line and Pony Express were transferred to it from the Laramie route. Thus was opened the route afterward adopted (in large measure) by the Union Pacific Railroad. General Johnston made constant representations and strenuous efforts to have this route opened, feeling sure that it must be the route for a railroad, if one was ever made through the Salt Lake region." This argument was Bridger's, of course, as made to Captain Stansbury, General Dodge and others, though John Bartleson, leaving Camp Scott December 1, 1857, and reaching Fort Laramie December 20, 1857, via Bridger's Pass and Laramie Plains, reported unfavorably on the route.

Withal, not many troopers actually complained, and all fared better than they expected to fare, and the Christmas and New Year holidays were appropriately celebrated. There were a few ladies in the encampment, including Mrs. Cumming, the wife of the new governor, who lent a refinement not often enjoyed among mountaineers.

But no amount of creature comforts could have prevented many of the desertions that occurred. Week after week one or more men, headed for Utah, slipped past the guard, whose sympathy or envy blinded him to his duty. Through these deserters the Mormons were enabled to keep in touch with affairs at Camp Scott.

In a similar manner the officers were kept in contact with the happenings in Utah. Defecting Mormons trickled into Camp Scott toward spring, bound for the states, finding their conditions and circumstances intolerable in Utah. "One *mater familias* had crossed the mountains during very severe weather in almost a state of nudity. Her dress consisted of a part of a single skirt, part of a man's shirt, and a portion of a jacket," one authority is quoted (61). "Thus habited, without a shoe or a thread more, she had walked 115 miles in the snow . . . and carried in her arms a sucking babe less than six weeks old. The soldiers pulled off their clothes and gave them to the unfortunate woman."

There may have been a sullen sort of silence in Camp Scott which simply abided its time and the coming of spring, but in Utah, a delirious sort of hilarity broke out now and then, gay festivities being frequent and prolonged, at least while the frost shackles still bound the army. Community singing served to sustain the spirits of the reprieved Saints, two verses of a rousing song being quoted as follows (60), from *Deseret News*.

"Old Sam has sent, I understand, Du dah! A Missouri ass to rule our land, Du dah! Du dah day! But if he comes we'll have some fun, Du dah! To see him and his juries run, Du dah! Du dah day! (Chorus) Then let us be on hand, by Brigham Young to stand; and if our enemies do appear, we'll sweep them from the land. (2d) Old squaw-killer Harney is on the way, Du dah! The

Mormon people for to slay, Du dah! Du dah day! Now if he comes the truth I'll tell, Du dah! Our boys will drive him down to hell, Du dah! Du dah day!"

As indicating the Utah state of mind a woman is quoted (60): "I expect you have heard the loud talk of Uncle Sam's great big army coming to kill the Saints," in a letter to her children in the East. "Now if you did but know how the Saints rejoice at the folly of the poor Gentiles. There are about four thousand on the border of our territory, and six hundred wagons—one naked mule to draw them—all the rest having died. The men are sitting in the snow, about a hundred and fifteen miles from us, living on three crackers a day, and three-quarters of a pound of beef a week. Thus you see the old Prophet's words are fulfilled—whoever shall fight against Zion shall perish."

A bishop in the pulpit declared (60) that "the whole United States and the whole world could not prevail against the Saints," and as for the army at Camp Scott, "a swarm of long-billed mosquitoes could eat them up at a supper spell." Another prominent official of the Church declared he had "wives enough to whip the United States," though he preferred not to shed blood, and would not, "unless the Holy Ghost dictates for us to shed the blood of our enemies, and then it is as just and right as it is for us to partake of the sacrament."

Wilford Woodruff (36) describes the victorious righteousness which pervaded the Utah consciousness in his journal. "The enemy is in a close place. Their provisions are rapidly diminishing and there are prospects of starvation. We have prayed that the Lord would lead them into the pit which they had prepared for the Saints, and the Lord heard our prayers and our enemies are now in a trap and are suffering humiliation without us harming a hair of their heads."

Woodruff sums up the situation in part as follows: "The expedition of the season is now entirely closed, and we have clearly seen the hand of the Lord made visible in our behalf. An army has been sent by the United States to make war upon us for the sole purpose of destroying the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The Church has been driven from the confines of the United States into the Rocky Mountains, then a Mexican territory, with the hope of the nation that we should perish; but as soon as they found that we were to live and prosper they became alarmed and resolved upon our destruction. . . .

"From two to three thousand of the brethren who went into the mountains under the command of Gen. D. H. Wells to hedge up the way of the enemy have arrived (in Salt Lake City). Our brethren made large entrenchments and ditches, and piled up large masses of rocks above the narrow passes for the purpose of rolling them down upon the enemy; but the Lord has fought our battles

and hedged up the way. When the army reached Hams Fork, one hundred and fifty miles from our city, the storms and cold killed their horses, mules and cattle by the hundreds, so that when the whole army got together with the governors and judges, whom the government had sent to rule over us, they had not teams enough left to draw one-third of their train and were obliged to stop and pass the winter in the storms of the mountains.

"Their wisdom seems to be taken from them, and our brethren have been able to herd them like a herd of cattle. Their soldiers shot grape and musket and minie balls at our men from time to time, and those balls fell like hail around the servants of God, but not a drop of their blood has been shed, neither did the brethren return fire upon the enemy even in a single instance. Fear has so taken hold of the soldiers that they would flee into the main body of the army at the approach of a small number of our brethren. Through all this President Young has been as calm as a summer's day. The army of Zion is now returning to its home with the same spirit of composure and quietude that it carried with it into the mountains."

Judge W. I. Appleby and William A. Hickman did a little frontiering in county government, by maintaining the county seat around Fort Bridger and Green River in their saddle-bags. Following this precedent Alfred Cumming transformed a dugout into a capitol and an executive mansion combined. He was within the Utah territorial boundary, by chance, at Camp Scott, hence he began at once to govern the territory, not yet realizing, as he learned later, that Brigham Young had not yet been displaced as governor of the people.

There may have been a touch of irony in the circumstance which at one time changed the territorial boundary to include the valuable opportunities at Fort Bridger and the Green River ferries, and which had at the same time innocently created a capitol site for an enemy government.

The first proclamation of the new governor was dated, "Near Fort Bridger, November 21, 1857," and was directed at the Mormons, telling them of their wickedness, in part as follows (45): "Many treasonable acts of violence have recently been committed by lawless individuals supposed to have been commanded by the late executive. Such persons are in a state of rebellion. Proceedings will be instituted against them in a court organized by Chief Justice Eckels, held in this county, which court will supersede the necessity of appointing military commissions for the trial of such offenders. . . .

"I come among you with no prejudices or enmities, and by the exercise of a just and firm administration, I hope to command your confidence. Freedom of conscience and the use of your own peculiar mode of serving God, are sacred rights, the exercise of which is

guaranteed by the Constitution and with which it is not the province of the government or the disposition of its representatives in this territory to interfere. In virtue of my authority as commander-in-chief of the militia of this territory, I hereby command all armed bodies of individuals by whomsoever organized, to disband and return to their respective homes. The penalty of disobedience to this command will subject the offenders to the punishment due to traitors."

A grand jury was empaneled at Camp Scott, which found indictments against Brigham Young and other prominent Mormons of treason, arising out of the burning of the supply trains. Damages were assessed against the Mormons for goods and livestock burned or driven away of \$1,000,000.

On receipt of Cumming's message, Brigham Young evidently knew the value of saying nothing. The militia "disbanded" as directed, though it was in obedience to the call of warm houses and ample food, rather than the dictation of Governor Cumming. They left Echo Canyon headquarters with General Wells on December 4th, leaving Captain Winder under the following instructions in part (45):

"You are appointed to take charge of the guard detailed to remain and watch the movements of the invaders. You will keep ten men at the lookout station on the heights of Yellow Creek. Keep a constant watch from the highest point during daylight, and a camp guard at night, also a horse guard out with the horses, which should be kept out on good grass all day, and grained with two quarts of feed per day. This advance will occasionally trail out towards Fort Bridger and look at our enemies from the high butte near that place. You will relieve this guard once a week.

"Keep open and travel the trail down to the head of Echo, instead of the road. Teamsters or deserters must not be permitted to come to your lookout station. Let them pass with merely knowing who and what they are, to your station on the Weber, and into the city. If officers or others undertake to come in, keep them prisoners until you receive further advices from the city. Especially and in no case let any of the would-be civil officers pass. These are, as far as I know, as follows: A. Cumming (governor), Eckels (chief justice), Dotson (marshal), Forney (superintendent of Indian affairs), Hockaday (district attorney). . . .

"If your lookout party discover any movement of the enemy in this direction, let them send two men to your camp on the Weber, and the remainder continue to watch their movements, and not all leave their station, unless it should prove a large party. . . . Where you can do so at an advantage, take all such parties prisoners if you can without shooting, but if you cannot, you are at liberty to

attack them, as no such party must be permitted to come into the city."

Late in December the territorial legislature, acting on a message from Governor Young, resolved and unanimously voted that the newly appointed officers should "neither qualify for, or assume and discharge within the limits of this territory the functions of the offices to which they have been appointed, so long as our territory is menaced by an invading army."

Toward spring there were symptoms of goose flesh among the Mormon leaders; and at one time Brigham Young sought to favor the army by sending a wagon load of salt which they greatly needed. But General Johnston's wounds were open, and the salt set up quite an irritation; thus the condiment was indignantly refused, the commander preferring to obtain his salt from the Indians and retain his self-respect, so he intimated.

During the previous summer, when the great wave of public sentiment over the country threatened to engulf the Mormons, with an army attached to serve as a sinker for the drowning hopes of the Saints, Brigham Young had grasped at a single straw of friendship back in the states. Thomas L. Kane, of Philadelphia, a man of influence and of a kindly heart toward the Mormons, had, at Brigham Young's request, examined the nation's pulse at Washington, and during the autumn and winter had journeyed to Utah by way of Panama and California.

Kane had a private conference with Brigham Young in Salt Lake City toward spring, during which a miracle seems to have been worked. Kane proceeded to Camp Scott, armed with intelligence from Young that the new officers would be welcomed, if they would slough the army in some manner. Kane conferred incognito with Governor Cumming on March 12, 1858, and for a few days after. The conference was so earnest and effectual that both men forgot the courtesies that may have been due to General Johnston. Quite a storm of gossip swept over the camp when it was reported that Kane was a Mormon spy, and his arrest was attempted; but the arrest was cancelled and a personal combat between Kane and Johnston was averted by Judge Eckels as intermediary. Kane obviously had his own way with Governor Cumming.

Both these men moved out of Camp Scott on April 5, and hurried toward Salt Lake City, under a Mormon escort. The Mormon troops, again stationed in Echo canyon, presumably had a lot of sport at the expense of the governor, by challenging the little party, and even threatening their arrest at one time. They forced Cumming to pass through the canyon at night, to conceal from his eyes the fortifications placed against the army. He was required to review numerous bodies of troops at different points, and to make a speech to each group, oblivious of the fact that these troops were sent ahead from each reviewing station, and were one and the same body of men which he addressed repeatedly.

It is also alleged that the Mormons played horse with the trusting old fellow after he got to Salt Lake City. He told the assembled Saints that he would enforce the law and uphold the nation's dignity, whereupon volunteer speakers sprang into action (by prearrangement some have claimed) to berate the government and belittle its representatives. Governor Cumming, remembering how Brigham Young was apparently unable to control the unruly spirits on that occasion, some years later told Stenhouse (60), "It was all humbug, sir; all humbug; but never mind, it is all over now. If it did them good, it did not hurt me. Brigham Young is a smart man—smart man, but he may yet find out that other people are not so blind as he may think they are. Smart man! But he doesn't know everything." He classed it with his experience with the troops in Echo canyon.

But if Brigham Young developed patches of goose flesh for his waywardness toward the soldiers, President Buchanan had a violent attack of the malady with complications, for having sicked an army onto an industrious and prayerful people. Thus about the earliest travelers overland that spring of 1858 were two peace (at any price) commissioners, direct from the nation's President.

They visited at Camp Scott briefly, but lost no time in getting an audience with Brigham Young, for whom, together with all the Mormons, they bore a pardon, provided the Saints would be good in the future. Brigham



Fort Bridger, November, 1857, desolated by fire as the Mormons departed ahead of Johnston's troops. Showing cobblestone walls built by the Mormons after possessing the Fort in 1853. ("The Utah Expedition," by A. Wagonmaster, Cin. 1858.)

Young listened very attentively to the commissioners, saying, "And as far as I am concerned, I thank President Buchanan for forgiving me, but I really cannot tell what I have done. I know one thing, and that is, that the people called 'Mormons' are a loyal and law-abiding people, and have ever been. Neither President Buchanan nor any one else can contradict the statement. It is true, Lot Smith burned some wagons containing government supplies for the army. This was an overt act, and if it is for this we are to be pardoned, I accept the pardon."

Reporting the accomplishment of their mission, the commissioners said the Mormons "denied that they had ever driven any officials from Utah, or prevented any civil officer from entering the territory. They admitted that they burned the army trains, and drove off the cattle from the army last fall, and for that act they accepted the President's pardon. All the charges that had been made against them, except the one last named, they denied. . . . We are pleased to state that the conference resulted in their agreeing to receive, quietly and peaceably, all the civil officers of the government, and not to resist them in the execution of the duties of their offices; and to yield obedience to the authorities and the laws of the United States.

"That they would offer no resistance to the army; that the officers of the army should not be resisted in the execution of their orders within the territory. In short, they agreed that the officers, civil and military, of the United States, should enter the territory without resistance, and exercise, peaceably and unmolested, all the functions of their various offices" (60).

Meanwhile Captain Marcy returned to Fort Bridger from New Mexico with fifteen hundred horses and mules, and five companies of infantry and mounted riflemen. Thus in a very few days, June 13, Johnston's army was guided by James Bridger into and through Echo canyon, Weber canyon, and Emigration canyon to the edge of Salt Lake City, Bridger having on June 11,

1858, been transferred on the rolls from Johnston's personal service to Capt. John H. Dickerson, at \$5 per day as formerly. They reached Salt Lake City on June 26.

But as the Mormons had captured an empty Fort Bridger in 1853, so did Johnston's army sack a depopulated Salt Lake City, for in indignation at the advance of the army, thirty thousand Mormons had been herded southward to Provo. Bridger was doubtless chief among those who would have gloated, just a little, over the privilege of parading through the streets with the subdued Mormons looking shamefully on. But if so, he was chief among those who paraded in front of the vacant stare of a deserted city.

It seems that the "move south" was resolved upon by the Mormon leaders as a result of Kane's first interview with Brigham Young. It was to be an indignation demonstration. The order went forth about the middle of March, soon after which date the Saints from northern Utah began clogging the roadways with their caravans of wagons and livestock. Most of the spring planting was thus abandoned, and a tremendous expense was incurred in the exodus.

Brigham Young had presumably seen the error of his ways, after the talk with Kane, and repented in part as follows (60): "We have been preparing to use up our enemies by fighting them, and if we take that course and shed the blood of our enemies, we will see the time, and that, too, not far from this very morning, when we will have to flee from our homes and leave the spoils to them. That is, as sure as we commence the game. If we open the ball upon them by slaying the United States soldiery, just so sure they would be fired with anger to lavishly expend their means to compass our destruction, and thousands, and millions, if necessary, would furnish the means, if the government was not able, and turn out and drive us from our homes, and kill us if they could."

The avowed intention was to go across the southwestern deserts to Mexico, but it seems evident that the

demonstration was not a serious move to vacate the state, since no one south of Provo moved. The Mormons claimed that they had left their houses littered with straw so that sentinels, whom they left, could immediately set fire to them in case the soldiers departed from the straight and narrow line of march through the city. Thus the coming of the soldiers was to have been celebrated with bonfires which the tears of a sympathetic nation might witness, but could not quench.

The movement of the troops through the city "was one of the most extraordinary scenes that have occurred in American history," a newspaper correspondent writes of the event (60). "All day long, from dawn till after sunset, the troops and trains poured through the city, the utter silence of the streets being broken only by the music of the military bands, the monotonous tramp of the regiments, and the rattle of the baggage wagons. . . . The only visible groups of spectators were on the corners near Brigham Young's residence, and consisted almost entirely of Gentile civilians. The stillness was so profound that, during the intervals between the passage of the columns, the monotonous gurgle of City Creek struck on every ear. . . . The troops crossed the Jordan (River) and encamped two miles from the city, on a dusty meadow by the river bank."

Resting three days by the river, the troops proceeded to Camp Floyd, about forty miles south of Salt Lake City, and nearly twenty miles west of Provo where the Saints were temporarily massed. By the 6th of July the last of the troops and equipment had arrived at Camp Floyd, and the Mormons had turned their heads northward again.

James Bridger's discharge as guide was dated July 2, 1858, at Camp Floyd, and was probably sought by him. He had been away from his business and his family more than a year; and as he could serve the soldiers little further, he hastened eastward over the overland trail. At Fort Bridger he found an entirely new establishment rising Phoenix-like from the ashes, under the hands of the soldiers left there.

Friends and interests along the way were numerous, but Bridger proceeded direct to the farm at Little Santa Fe, or Westport, Missouri. On arrival in early August, a six-months-old son, William, whom he had not yet seen, was held out to him as a greeting. But the hands that held the babe were strange, for the wife, but a few weeks previously, had passed to her reward, orphaning the family and widowing for the third time the disappointed old scout.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE FATE OF FORT BRIDGER

PROBABLY no place was quite so near to James Bridger's heart as Fort Bridger, yet after the spring of 1858 he seldom revisited the post. His affections had been transferred, in a measure, to the lease which promised to net him between \$6,000 and \$10,000 (but which never netted him a cent personally); and his subsequent fields of activity were mostly east of the mountains.

Nevertheless, the halo of Bridger's memory rested like a fixed crown over the premises. Men of importance came to the fort, flourished for a time, and departed one after another; and the fort itself had a kaleidoscopic career, yet the spirit of James Bridger, trapper, scout, trader and guide, pervaded the atmosphere with never fading distinctness.

His name and his fame clung to the fort almost as securely as if he himself had remained there. A beautiful stone, bearing a trite epitaph, has been raised by friendship's hands in a Kansas City cemetery; yet that stone will crumble, and the epitaph be forgotten before that monument is eradicated from history which still remains visible through all of civilization's veneer at Fort Bridger.

Major William Hoffman, who arrived at Fort Bridger with a small command, just as the army was leaving for Utah, was directed to remain and rebuild the fort as a military post. The old cobblestone wall built by the Mormons, a segment of which remains to this present day, was utilized to a certain extent; and several comfortable barracks of logs were built, together with a trading post, barns, corrals and other improvements.

Few changes were made in the general appearance of the fort afterward. The Fort Bridger which General Dodge saw and pictured (1) in 1866-1867 was the post established in 1858, but which had suffered considerable

depreciation. In 1880, when Bridger was suing the government for payment for his holdings at Fort Bridger, a number of affidavits were made by his friends, describing the buildings, undoubtedly those built in 1858. Owing to the importance of those documents, and their comparative inaccessibility in the government archives, they are here reproduced. EXHIBIT 6 in (52) is as follows:

"State of Missouri, City of Saint Louis, ss.:

"Be it remembered that on this 27th day of April, A. D. 1878, personally appeared before the undersigned, a notary public within and for the city and state aforesaid, who was qualified as such on the 28th day of November, A. D. 1874, and whose commission expires on the 4th day of November, in the year 1878, August Archambault, who is known to me to be the person he represents himself to be, and upon being duly sworn by me says, that he is personally well acquainted with James Bridger, the western pioneer and trader, and has known him a long time as an honest and upright man; that affiant has been employed by the company of which James Bridger was a partner, as a hunter and trapper.

"Affiant was, in the spring of 1843, with said James Bridger at the site of the present Fort Bridger, on Black's Fork, in Green River valley, now in Wyoming Territory, when he, the said James Bridger, located his ranch or fort there, and remained there during the whole time it took to build it. Said ranch or fort contained thirteen spacious and substantial log houses, constructed out of heavy hewed timber, which had to be hauled from some distance; the roof and floors were made out of sawed boards, which were sawed out with whip-saws; the roofs were also covered with sod to render them fireproof, and the houses were so located as to form a hollow square in the center of said fort, and the whole was surrounded by a stone wall, strong and solid; outside of such fort were six other such log houses, built in the same manner and of the same material, and were used as stables and other purposes; besides these there were strong corrals and inclosures for the protection and safe keeping of horses and cattle. All these improvements were, owing to existing circumstances, very costly and expensive.

Affiant further says that Mr. James Bridger resided at said ranch or fort for a number of years and did a general trading business with Indians, trappers, and emigrants to Oregon and California; that he claimed the premises as his home, and only home, and to affiant's best knowledge and belief had no other home at that time; that the said James Bridger lived there with his family, and it was generally conceded by everybody that he owned said premises, and held them in undisputed possession.

"Affiant further says that he is not related to James Bridger, and has no interest in any of his claims whatsoever.

"A. J. ARCHAMBAULT.

"Sworn and subscribed to before me the year and day first above written. Witness my hand and notarial seal at office.

"JULIUS CONRAD, *Notary Public*.

"And I do further certify that I am not related to James Bridger, and have no interest in this claim whatsoever.

"JULIUS CONRAD, *Notary Public*."

EXHIBIT 7 (52)

"*State of Missouri, County of Jackson, ss.:*

"I, William T. MackCraw, of the County of Jackson, in the State of Missouri, upon oath state that I am well acquainted with James Bridger, lately of Fort Bridger, Wyoming Territory, and now of Jackson County, Missouri; that I know that the said James Bridger resided at said Fort Bridger with his family, as his home for many years; that his said improvements thereon consisted, as nearly as I can remember, of thirteen houses altogether; strong, hewed log houses, fortified by a stone wall, laid in cement, eighteen feet high and five feet thick, encompassing an area of about four thousand square feet; also a strong corral two hundred by three hundred feet square, used for stock, inclosed by a stone wall ten feet high and two and one-half or three feet thick, with other out-houses, pasture, field and grounds, costing an outlay of at least \$20,000, considering the price of labor and the remote distance from the civilized world at the time.

"I also understand that the said James Bridger had leased said fort and premises in the fall of the year 1857 to our government for a term of ten years at the annual rent of \$600 in gold, and that it was also agreed in said written contract that at the expiration of said term of ten years the government could, at its option, purchase said fort and premises for the sum of \$10,000, or return the same to its owner with all improvements thereupon. And I further state that I am not in the least interested in this or any other claim of said James Bridger.

"WILLIAM T. (his x mark) MACKCRAW.

"Signed in the presence of:

A. WASHMAN,

W. W. GRIFFITH.

"*State of Missouri, County of Jackson:*

"Personally appeared before the undersigned, a notary public for and within the state and county aforesaid, who was qualified as such February 24, 1879, and whose commission expires February 24, 1883, William T. MackCraw, who being duly sworn, says the foregoing statements are true and correct to the best of his knowledge and belief.

"Sworn and subscribed to before me this 20th day of January, 1880.

"A. WASHMAN, *Notary Public.*"

EXHIBIT 8 (52)

"State of Missouri, County of Jackson, ss.:

"I, John Kinney, of the County of Jackson, in the State of Missouri, upon oath state that I am well acquainted with James Bridger, formerly of Fort Bridger, in Wyoming Territory, but now residing in this county and state; that I was employed as a teamster in conveying stores to the army of Utah, under the command of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, in the year 1857; that I remained with said army for a number of months at Fort Bridger.

"That it was generally known and understood by all connected with said army, and I do believe, that the said James Bridger did rent or lease his property or premises called Fort Bridger, to our government for a term of years and for a stipulated sum, to be paid to him annually.

"That there were valuable improvements upon said premises upon our arrival there, made by the said James Bridger, which to the best of my recollection consisted in thirteen houses, constructed out of heavy hewed logs, plank floors and plank roofs, covered with earth and sod, which were inclosed by a stone wall, laid in cement, about eighteen feet high by five feet thick, having bastions at each corner, and inclosing about four thousand square feet of ground.

"Also a corral for stock, about two hundred by three hundred feet square, likewise inclosed by a stone wall, laid in cement, about ten feet high and two and one-half or three feet thick, together with six outhouses, also built of heavy hewed logs; pastures and grounds.

"In my judgment the above named improvements on said premises could not at that time be placed there at a cost of less than \$20,000.

"I am also convinced that our government derived great benefit by leasing said premises, since it afforded shelter for the government stores, to the troops and property, which otherwise would have been destroyed and caused great suffering, if not destruction to said army.

"And that to the best of my knowledge the said James Bridger has not received any payment on account of said lease or rent of said premises, and that the government has continued to occupy said premises up to the present date.

"And I do furthermore state that I am not interested whatsoever in the claim of said James Bridger.

JOHN KINEY (*Sic.*)

"State of Missouri, County of Jackson, ss.:

"Personally appeared before me the undersigned, a notary public within and for the state and county aforesaid, who was qualified as such February 24, 1879, and whose commission expires Febru-

ary 24, 1883, John Kinney (sic) who is personally known to me, and who, being duly sworn, upon his oath says that the foregoing statement is correct and true, to the best of his knowledge and belief.

"Sworn and subscribed to before me this 21st day of January, 1880.

"A. WASHMAN, *Notary Public.*"

EXHIBIT 9 (52)

"State of Missouri, County of Jackson, ss.:

"I, O. H. P. Rippeto, of the County of Jackson in the State of Missouri, upon oath state that I am well acquainted with James Bridger, formerly of Fort Bridger, now in Wyoming Territory, but who now resides in the County of Jackson, in the State of Missouri; that I accompanied the so-called army of Utah, commanded by Albert S. Johnston, in the year 1857, as a wagon-master in the employ of John M. Wells, conveying government stores for said army, and remained with said army at Fort Bridger for some time; that I always understood and believed that the said James Bridger had rented or leased his property called Fort Bridger to our government for a term of years, and for a stipulated sum of money, to be paid to him annually; that on our arrival at Fort Bridger we found quite valuable improvements on said premises, which consisted, as nearly as I can remember, in thirteen houses, built of heavy hewed logs, floored with sawed planks, and covered with sawed planks and sod, which were inclosed by a stone wall laid in cement about eighteen feet high and five feet thick, with bastions at each corner, inclosing about four thousand square feet of ground. Also a strong corral for stock, about two hundred by three hundred feet square, inclosed in a like manner by a stone wall laid in cement and about ten feet high and two and one-half or three feet thick, together with six other outhouses, pastures and grounds.

"In my estimation the whole improvements on said premises, considering the price of labor and the remote distance from the States, could not be placed there at a cost of less than \$20,000.

"I also state that I do believe that the government was greatly benefited by leasing or renting said premises from James Bridger, by rendering shelter against the inclemency of the weather in that severe winter for the government stores, the troops, and animals of said army, which otherwise would have certainly suffered severely.

"And that to the best of my knowledge said James Bridger has not received any payment or recompensation on account of said lease or rent, and that the government has continued to occupy said premises to the present day.

"And I do furthermore state that I have no interest whatsoever in this or any other claim of the said James Bridger.

O. H. P. RIPPETO.

"State of Missouri, County of Jackson, ss.:

"Personally appeared before me the undersigned, a notary public for and within the State and county aforesaid, who was qualified as such on February 24, 1879, and whose commission expires February 24, 1883, O. H. P. Rippeto, who is personally known to me, and who, being duly sworn, upon his oath says that the foregoing statement is correct and true to the best of his knowledge and belief.

"Sworn and subscribed to before me this 21st day of January, 1880.

"A. WASHMAN, *Notary Public.*"

EXHIBIT 10 (52)

"Indian Territory, Choctaw Nation, ss.:

"I, Henry T. Chiles, of the Chickasaw Nation in Indian Territory upon oath state: That I am well acquainted with James Bridger, formerly of Fort Bridger, in Wyoming Territory, but now residing in Jackson County, Missouri; that I was at Fort Bridger in about the year 1857, carrying stores to said fort; that I always understood, and do believe, that the said James Bridger did rent or lease for a term of years his premises, called Fort Bridger, to the Government of the United States; that there were valuable improvements at said Fort Bridger, consisting, as nearly as I can remember, of a number of heavy log houses, fortified by a stone wall about eighteen feet high and having bastions on each corner, said wall encompassing a space of about four thousand square feet. There was also a corral for stock inclosed by a stone wall about ten feet high and about three hundred by two hundred feet long, besides several log houses outside the Fort itself.

"The whole improvements, owing to the remoteness from civilization and high price of labor out there at that time, could not have been placed there for a sum of less than \$20,000.

"That to the best of my knowledge he (Mr. Bridger) has not received payment for any part thereof, and that the government has continued to occupy his premises to the present time. I do also state that I am not in any wise concerned or benefited by this or any other claim of the said James Bridger.

"H. T. CHILES."

"Indian Territory, Choctaw Nation, ss.:

"Henry T. Chiles personally appeared before the undersigned, a United States Commissioner for and within the County and Territory aforesaid, who is personally known to me, and who, being duly sworn, upon his oath says that the foregoing statement is correct and true to the best of his knowledge and belief.

"Sworn and subscribed to before me this 30th day of March, A. D. 1880.

"ISRAEL W. STONE, *United States Commissioner.*"

EXHIBIT 14 (52)

"State of Missouri, County of Jackson, ss.:

"Personally appeared before me, George T. Purcell, a justice of the peace in and for the County and State aforesaid, Joseph T. S. Wright, a person well known to me, to be respectable and entitled to full credit and belief, and after being duly sworn testifies as follows: My name is Joseph T. S. Wright; my age is fifty-three years; my postoffice address is Oak Grove, Jackson County, Missouri. In the year 1857 I was a soldier with Colonel A. S. Johnston. We started for Utah in the month of August, 1857. I belonged to a battalion, four companies, commanded by Colonel Barnett E. Bee. We started from Fort Leavenworth. We were overtaken by Colonel Johnston about one hundred miles east of the South Pass; we then all marched together; we arrived at Fort Bridger in November of the same year. The winter was so severe that when we got to Fort Bridger Colonel Johnston concluded to remain there during the winter; we remained there until the next June, 1858. While we were there I understood from the officers of the command, as well as Captain Bridger, that the officers, Colonel Johnston and others, had leased the Fort for ten years at \$600 per annum, and that the officers agreed to pay Captain Bridger \$10,000 for the Fort and his improvements, if he could make a good title for the same. The improvements consisted, as nearly as I recollect, of some thirteen log houses, strong, and hewed of heavy logs, fortified by a stone wall laid in cement, eighteen feet high and five feet thick, inclosing an area of about four thousand square feet; also a strong corral two hundred by three hundred feet square, used for stock, inclosed by a stone wall, also laid in cement, ten feet high and two and one-half feet thick, with other outhouses, all costing at least an outlay of \$20,000, considering the price of labor and the remote distance from the civilized world at the time it was built. I was well acquainted with Captain James Bridger; he died in this county about six or seven years ago. I further state that I have no interest in the prosecution of this claim.

"JOS. T. S. WRIGHT.

"Subscribed and sworn to before me this the 17th day of May, 1886.

"GEORGE T. PURCELL,

"Justice of the Peace, Blue Top, Jackson Co., Mo.

"State of Missouri, County of Jackson, ss.:

"I, M. S. Burr, Clerk of the county court of the County and State aforesaid, the same being a court of record, and having a seal, do hereby certify that George T. Purcell, Esq., before whom the annexed instrument was proven or acknowledged, was at the date thereof a Justice of the Peace, in and for said county, duly commissioned, qualified, and authorized to take acknowledgments and administer oaths, and I verily believe the signature thereto to be

genuine. I further certify that the said instrument is duly executed according to the laws of the State of Missouri.

"In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of said court at Independence the 17th day of May, 1886.

"M. S. BURR, *Clerk.*"

EXHIBIT 15 (52)

"State of Missouri, County of Jackson, ss.:

"Personally appeared before L. F. McCoy, clerk of the circuit court, Joseph C. Irwin, well known to me to be respectable and entitled to full credit and belief, and after being duly sworn, testifies as follows:

"My name is Joseph C. Irwin; my age is seventy years; I reside at Kansas City, Missouri; my postoffice is Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri; I have resided in this county for sixty years. I was a freighter for many years across the plains; I was the senior partner of the firm of Irwin, Jackman & Company, for transporting government supplies to Utah and Mexico, and other points west during the late war, and a private freighter for many years prior to that time. I was well acquainted with James Bridger, the founder and builder of Fort Bridger, on the road to Salt Lake, in the Territory of Wyoming, and was with Colonel A. S. Johnston's command in 1857 when his army reached the fort above mentioned and where he went into winter quarters; Mr. Bridger was with the command, employed as a guide. After Colonel Johnston went into winter quarters he leased the fort and all the buildings, consisting of a number of strong houses, built of hewn timbers, substantially built, which was inclosed and fortified by a strong stone wall of great height and thickness, with bastions at each corner, and was so built to protect the owner from the attacks of the Indians. There was also a corral for stock, similarly inclosed with a stone wall; besides there were several buildings and outhouses of same construction as those inside the fort, which were occupied in former years by trappers and traders and other families, with splendid grazing grounds, with finest water and timber, and, considering the time and the great distance from any settlements when they were built, they must have cost many thousand dollars. I am well acquainted with the values of ranch property, and know that such property would then and now be worth \$25,000 or \$30,000. But I have no knowledge of what Colonel Johnston was to pay for the use of said property, or how long he rented it for. I have no interest, direct or indirect, in the prosecution of this claim.

"JOSEPH C. IRWIN.

"Subscribed and sworn to before me this 12th day of July, A. D. 1887.

L. F. MCCOY,

Clerk of the Circuit Court of Jackson County, Missouri."

EXHIBIT 19 (52)

"State of Missouri, County of Jackson, ss.:

"Daniel M. Ross, being duly sworn, says that he was well acquainted with James Bridger, at his fort bearing his (Bridger's) name, in 1857, when the Utah army took possession of said Fort; that the said Fort Bridger consisted of thirteen log houses built and located so as to form a hollow square, in the center of an area of about four thousand feet square, all of which was surrounded with a strong, solid, stone wall, laid in cement, about eighteen feet high and five feet thick, with bastions at each corner. Outside said wall was a strong corral for stock about two hundred by three hundred feet square and inclosed in like manner by a strong stone wall, laid in cement, about ten feet high and about two and one-half or three feet thick. There were also other outhouses.

"Some of the houses were destroyed by the Mormons, but the walls were in good condition when the said army took possession of them.

"The cement used in said walls was very expensive, in that remote Territory, as it had to be transported an enormous distance, and likewise the large quantity of stone. Skilled labor commanded high wages, and said walls must have cost, and were worth when taken by the army, at least \$30,000.

"DANIEL M. ROSS.

"Witness to signature:

"JAMES H. O'BRIEN.

"State of Missouri, County of Jackson, ss.:

"On December 7, 1888, personally appeared before me, Henry P. Scott, a notary public, in and for the said County and State, Daniel M. Ross, who subscribed his name and made oath to the foregoing statements; and I further certify that said Daniel M. Ross is a worthy citizen and is entitled to credit. Witness my hand and notary seal.

"HENRY P. SCOTT, *Notary Public.*

"My commission expires July 9, 1892."

Quartermaster-General S. B. Holabird, in reviewing these documents, says in part: "It is true that several persons, some twenty or thirty years after the event, state that when General Johnston arrived at Bridger there were at the fort a number of log houses and other improvements of the value of from \$20,000 to \$30,000.

"These persons are unquestionably mistaken. They have probably confounded the affairs then existing with those which existed before the destruction of the buildings by the Mormons.

"This conclusion is inevitable, because General Johnston, in making his report immediately upon taking possession of the premises, distinctly stated that the buildings had been burned; and besides, he could not have overlooked, if they had existed, fifteen or twenty buildings, particularly as shelter for troops, as winter was approaching, and for supplies for his army were so much needed.

"And again, Mr. Bridger would not have consented as he did to sell to the United States, for the sum of \$10,000, improvements said to be of the value of \$20,000 to \$30,000, and also the 3,898 acres of land which he claimed to own, if such improvements existed when he executed the lease hereinbefore referred to." (Letter in full in a subsequent chapter.)

Clearly only one or two of these affiants could have actually seen and remembered conditions at Fort Bridger in the winter of 1857-1858, and none of them has a correct picture of conditions immediately prior to the flight of the Mormons, when only two or three buildings stood within the stone walls. It is thus unavoidably concluded that the descriptions, most of which seem to have been inspired because of their similarity, refer to buildings erected by the soldiers in 1858.

Since Bridger could neither read nor write, he may, or may not have been responsible for the precise language used by these vouchers; though he must have inspired the language which specifically enumerates the improvements. Of course Bridger did not lease any improvements to the army, but it will not be forgotten that the ten-year lease provided that in case the property reverted to him, all improvements made by the government were to become his property. It is thus assumed that since he was not allowed to complete the title to the land, as set forth in a subsequent chapter, and that the terms of the lease or contract were not complied with, Bridger was gathering vouchers to support his claims for the value of his interests at Fort Bridger, in accordance with the stipulations in the lease.

The improvements made in 1858 were completed by

Lieut.-Col. E. A. S. Canby, who relieved Major Hoffman on August 17, 1858. From its completion, the fort was transformed from a trapper's and trader's headquarters to a frontier military post, and remained so until 1890. Capt. Jesse A. Gore became commander in May, 1861 (18), but was succeeded in August, 1861, by Capt. J. C. Clarke, who was supported by only a handful of soldiers whose terms of enlistment were expiring soon.

In December, 1861, Captain Clarke was ordered east because of the Civil War preparations, leaving Sergeant Boyer and a few privates in charge of the post and the property. During the calendar year of 1862, Fort Bridger was thus without a garrison or a commissioned officer. "This was a somewhat critical period in the history of the post (18). The Shoshone Indians were at the time hostile, and the Mormons, since the withdrawal of the troops, were regarded as still more dangerous enemies.

"Fearing trouble, and for the protection of property at the post, as well as for personal security, Judge W. A. Carter, the post trader, organized a volunteer company of mountaineers from the surrounding country. In December, 1862, Capt. M. G. Lewis . . . arrived and assumed command. During several succeeding years, Fort Bridger was garrisoned by companies of California and Nevada volunteers; and various changes occurred from time to time."

Several of the old trappers remained in the neighborhood of the fort in permanent homes, Uncle Jack Robinson being the oldest and most distinguished among them to lend a share of the picturesque to the place. Uncle Jack was evidently sometimes mistaken for James Bridger by reputation by those who did not actually see him, for Rusling (62) mentions him in October, 1866, though Bridger was nowhere near the place.

"Judge Carter, the sutler and postmaster at Bridger, and a striking character in many ways, already had several large tracts under cultivation, by way of experiment, and the next year he expected to try more. His grass was magnificent; his oats, barley and potatoes very fair; but his wheat and Indian corn wanted more sunshine.

The post itself is 7000 feet above the sea, and the Wasatch Mountains just beyond were reported snow-capped the year round."

"Black's Fork runs directly through the parade ground, in front of the officers' quarters, and was said to furnish superb trout-fishing in season. In summer, it seemed to us, Bridger must be a delightful place; but in winter rather wild and desolate. Apart from the garrison, the only white people there, or near there, were Judge Carter and his employees. A few lodges of Shoshones, the famous Jim Bridger with them, were camped below the Fort, but they were quiet and peaceable."

Rusling's official Inspection report, dated at Fort Bridger October 11, 1866, is rather extended and contains much of general interest. While en route from Denver he had met General Greenville M. Dodge, on October 5th, who was returning from the Fort Bridger country, where he had been making and examining surveys of the country for the Union Pacific Railroad. Thus the Fort Bridger that Rusling saw was also the Fort Bridger that General Dodge saw (1).

"The post before the rebellion was built and regarded as a six-company post, but several of the buildings have been destroyed, so that its present capacity is rated at four companies," Rusling reports (65); "The garrison consists of about 135 men. The post has been badly, not to say shamefully, abused during the past few years, and much work will be required to restore it to its former serviceable condition. There were sixty horses and one hundred and twenty-eight mules, many of which were surplus, though fifteen six-mule teams were in use getting in the winter's wood supply. Speaking of the merchandise stores, he says: "Good storehouses, partly of log and partly of stone, shelter these supplies.

"The reservation here at the post is a tract of land 25 miles north and south, by 20 miles east and west, embracing the best and most of the valley bordering on Black's and Smith's Forks of Green River (including old Fort Supply). . . . The large extent of this reservation was caused, I hear, by a desire at the time to exclude the Mormons from the vicinity of the Fort, and confine them, as far as practicable, to Salt Lake Valley. As a military measure this was wise, while they were hostile; but as an economic measure, in view of the post here, it has ceased to be judicious. Were the valley here settled up, or even partially settled, the post could be maintained at a fraction of its present cost.

"The only cultivation or farming done is by the sutler, Judge Carter." Rusling complained that Judge Carter had a monopoly, and was not only overcharging the government, but was selling much stuff from the reservation to other interests, probably two-thirds of it. An enormous surplus of products were said to be on hand, and an immense organization was maintained by the sutler, who employed a hundred men. "He came here poor in 1857, as I am informed, and is now reported worth over \$200,000. He has two

stores in this county, at which he sold last year over \$150,000 worth of goods, as he informs me, at not less than fifty per cent profit, and I apprehend his books would show that he has already reimbursed himself from his farms several times over.

"I regret that I find it to be my duty to report these facts; but I know only my duty as an inspector, and I see no reason why Mr. Carter should be allowed these handsome privileges at the expense of the government over other citizens equally worthy, no matter how excellent a man he may be, or how polite he has been to me personally. . . .

"In conclusion I beg leave to repeat my regret that I have felt compelled to remark on Judge Carter as I have in previous pages. In nothing that I there say would I reflect on the man's character or integrity. He has treated me with great urbanity while here, and Major Burt certifies to his uniform politeness, and good conduct. But as an inspector of the Quartermaster's Department on official duty I must forego all personal considerations and cannot forbear to give my impressions and report facts as I find them. It is not a pleasant duty to criticise a person holding the positions and influence he does—as sutler, probate judge, postmaster, special agent of the Postoffice Department, etc. But he seems to have gotten hold of Fort Bridger and its appurtenances as his special monopoly, and I should be false to my sense of duty if I hesitated to lay the facts before you as they strike me. His power at Fort Bridger is universally commented on and is the wonder of the country from Fort Leavenworth here."

After the autumn of 1858 Fort Bridger was a headquarters station for the mail and passenger stage line. In the spring of 1860 it became a home station on the Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express, or the Pony Express line; and in March, 1861, it became a home station for the same company's daily Overland Stage line. In the autumn of 1861 the Fort Bridger telegraph office was opened, and about the same time the Pony Express stables were turned over to the harness horses of the stage line.

In 1866 the transportation business was taken over by Wells, Fargo & Company, which maintained headquarters at Fort Bridger for that part of the route, until the railroad absorbed the business in May, 1869 (64). The post was without a garrison from June, 1878, to May, 1880; but the necessity for maintaining close communication with the Indian wards of the nation brought the decision

to partially rehabilitate the post in 1883 to care for an enlarged garrison. Then in December, 1885, the wooden poles on the telegraph line to the railroad station at Carter were replaced by iron poles. But after a number of stone buildings had risen up, making a substantial and permanent establishment, the need for a military headquarters passed, and the troops were finally withdrawn November 6, 1890.

CHAPTER XLV

CAPTAIN RAYNOLDS EMPLOYS BRIDGER

JAMES BRIDGER'S farm at Westport, Missouri, may have been a good place for his children, but not for its roving owner; his heart was in the Rocky Mountains. Thus after adjusting his domestic affairs at the farm, and probably spending the winter of 1858-1859 at that place with his children, he revisited his old friends at St. Louis. The establishment of P. Choteau, Jr., & Company, outfitters to the mountain men, and one of the oldest merchandising firms in the city, was headquarters for the mountaineers. Through this firm, in 1859, Bridger was recommended, and was employed, by Capt. W. F. Reynolds, of the Corps of Engineers of the United States Army.

Captain Reynolds had instructions to make a thorough exploration of the Yellowstone River and all its tributaries, being the area now comprised within the states of Wyoming, Montana, and adjacent sections to the east and the west. Such an expedition was like journeying back along the paths and among the scenes of early manhood to James Bridger, and he was entering that mature age when such an excursion, in comparative luxury of equipment, would be fully appreciated.

Boarding the steamers, *Spread Eagle* and *Chippewa*, of P. Choteau, Jr., & Company, engaged in Indian traffic on the upper Missouri, the Reynolds party, consisting of about fifteen scientific men, and James Bridger as guide, embarked from St. Louis on May 28, 1859. Annuities for the Indians, and the annual shipment of goods to the American Fur Company's posts (66), constituted the cargo, Reynolds having been directed to distribute the articles to the Sioux Indians.

The Yankton Sioux visited the boats above Sioux City in full costume, and enjoyed the usual feast of coffee and hard bread. At Fort Randall, the last military post on

the river, Lieutenant Smith and thirty men joined the Reynolds party on July 13 to act as escort through the Indian country. The steamers arrived at Fort Pierre on June 18, where the principal tribes of Sioux were to receive their annuities.

These annuities were in fulfillment of the government's agreement as part of a peace treaty made two years previously; but the Indians were still haughty and were unconfined. They believed they had been cheated out of some of their rights; and that the annuities were in payment for their lands. About fifty gayly dressed chiefs boarded the vessels, however, for a talk with Captain Reynolds, the local Indian agents participating.

Captain Reynolds was especially desirous of having peace fully established before he ventured into the wilderness across the Sioux lands; thus he addressed the chiefs at great length and in much detail as to the government's attitude and aims. Chief Bear Rib, as the Sioux spokesman, complained that the Yankton Sioux had sold their land and were to be pitied; he proposed to keep his own lands for his people, and announced himself as the brother and not the ward of the white man.

"My brother, what I tell you I tell my father (the Indian agent) also," said Bear Rib. "He takes my words and puts them into the water, and makes other reports of what words I send to my great father. I believe there are poor people below who put other words in the place of those I say. My brother, look at me; you do not find me poor; but when this ground is gone then I will be poor indeed. General Harney told us that no whites were going to travel through this country; but I see wagons landed, and you wish to go through.

"I hear that a reservation has been kept for the Yanktons below. If you were to ask me for a piece of land I would not give it. I cannot spare it, and I like it very much. All this country on each side of this river belongs to me. I know that from the Mississippi to this river the country all belongs to us, and that we have traveled from the Yellowstone to the Platte. All this country, as I have said, is ours, and if you, my brother, should ask me for

it I should not give it to you, for I like it and I hope you will listen to me."

Chief Two Bears supported Bear Rib in a similar speech, and others assured Captain Raynolds that irresponsible young men might make trouble in case he started across their realm. Somewhat nettled, Raynolds pointed out the provisions of the Harney treaty, and demanded a direct answer to the question: "Would they take the goods and guarantee my safe passage through their territory, as stipulated in the Harney treaty, or should I keep the former and force my way through?" At this the chiefs stated that he could go through. Raynolds then demanded that the Indians furnish the expedition with a competent guide, and began arrangements to deliver the goods.

The refined sensibilities of Captain Raynolds received quite a shock on making a chance visit to an apartment occupied by the Indian chiefs in the trading house, where he found them lounging about almost naked. "They had discarded their gaudy vestments and barbaric trappings, and with these their glory had departed. A filthy cloth about the loins, and a worn buffalo robe or a greasy blanket constituted the only covering to their nakedness.

"They were lying about on the floor in all conceivable postures, their whole air and appearance indicating ignorance and indolence, while the inevitable pipe was being passed from hand to hand. Dirt and degradation were the inseparable accompaniments of this scene, which produced an ineffaceable impression upon my mind, banishing all ideas of dignity in the Indian character, and leaving a vividly realizing sense of the fact that the red men are savages."

A week was spent at Fort Pierre, distributing the annuities and making everything ready for the movement of the caravan for the west on June 28, 1859. About a mile from Pierre "were a number of Indian graves, the bodies being either inclosed in boxes, many of which were not more than four feet in length, although containing the remains of adults; or else wrapped in skins or blankets and laid upon scaffolds of poles from four to six feet in height. Some of the bodies were rolled in scarlet blankets and flags, and other votive

offerings of cloth or ornaments decorated all the scaffolds. The scene was well calculated to remind us that we had left civilization and were now among savages."

Sunday, July 3, 1859, after having penetrated westward from the crossing of the Cheyenne River, "We remained in camp today, believing this to be my duty to my Maker, my country, and the party. I have determined that nothing but absolute necessity shall induce me to move camp on the Sabbath. Consequently nothing save the necessary guard duty was required of any of the party. After dinner I invited all who were willing, to attend a short religious service, consisting of the reading of a portion of Scripture, and of a short sermon, and closing with prayer. I am glad to be able to say the service was well attended.

"After dark a bright light was observed in the prairie to the north of us, which Bridger interpreted as indicating that the Indians were watching our movements."

Still westward, the route was nearly devoid of grass for the animals, water for all, and wood for fuel for many miles, though Owl Creek, on July 6th, afforded a semblance of all these necessities. The first wild animals seen on the trip were near here, the party sighting a few antelope and straggling buffalo bulls, on the 8th.

"As yet we have met no Indians, nor any indications of their presence here for months, although the fires burning around us nightly show that they are watching our movements. Our Indian guide, who was furnished at Fort Pierre by the chiefs in council, has been very efficient, perpetually watching for good roads, and since he has learned the requirements of our wagons, rarely mistaking. I have furnished him a mule and he now seems extremely happy, and talks of accompanying us through the entire trip. His felicity is probably explained by the fact that he has been abundantly fed, a full stomach constituting the Indian idea of the acme of all human happiness."

At Miry Creek on July 13th the guide indicated a ford at a quicksandy crossing, and sat quietly in his saddle while the attempt was made. Captain Reynolds, dissatisfied, galloped several miles up and down stream, but found no better crossing. "This is but one of the many instances in which our (Indian) guide has manifested a perfect and minute knowledge of the country, that has been invaluable to the expedition."

Creeks in deep gulleys alternated with creeks into whose bottoms wells were sunk for water, as the party passed northward around Black Hills. Game became more plentiful, but Reynolds writes: "Civilized life could find no home in this region, and if the savage desires its continued possession, I can see no present reason for its disputing." . . . "The site of our camp is marked by the remains of an immense Indian lodge, the frame of which consists of large poles, over thirty feet in length. Close by is also a high post

around which a perfect circle of buffalo skulls has been arranged.”²⁴

July 20 the party entered the buffalo country, and James Bridger headed a small group of soldiers on a hunting trip, and brought in the choice meats from several buffalo cows which they killed.

“About an hour after the train was in motion, our Indian guide was missing and has not been seen since. When last noticed he was looking for a point at which to cross a gulley, and having found one uttered his usual cry of ‘wash-te’ (good), and then sought shelter from a slight shower under a neighboring pine. He remained there until all the train had passed, and then quietly slipped away. Mr. Hutton reports having seen signal fires near Bear Lodge, and the probability is that he has gone to join his tribe. I cannot believe that he meditates mischief, but think he is afraid to remain with us longer, as we are now nearly out of the Sioux country, and will soon be among the Crows. He has spoken repeatedly along the route of accompanying us through the entire trip, but his courage has probably failed with the prospect of meeting the hereditary enemies of his tribe.

“His services have been of the greatest value; his minute knowledge of the country having excellently qualified him for his important duties, while his invariable good humor and honest face had made him a universal favorite with all the party, and had given foundation for the hope that he was an exception to the usual rule as to Indian honesty. He has, however, testified to his thorough training as a savage, by taking with him the mule, saddle and bridle that I had furnished him. The important nature of the

24. A story of Bridger's discovery of gold about this time is told by Frank Hall, in his *History of Colorado*, to 1890. “Another cause of more than ordinary importance which operated to the diversion of our own and other migratory peoples, and consequently to the disadvantage of Colorado in 1874, was the reported discovery of very rich gold mines in the Black Hills of Dakota. The impelling cause of the interest excited, and which soon induced an extensive movement in that direction, was a report made by General George A. Custer, who by order of the government traversed and examined the country in 1874, and gave a glowing report of its resources in gold, timber, etc., which was emphasized and made infinitely more attractive by the floating rumor that the famous old mountaineer, trapper and hunter, Jim Bridger, had found gold there in 1859, while acting as guide and interpreter to a military exploring party commanded by Captain Reynolds.

“As the story ran, he discovered it in a brook where he stopped to slake his thirst, and carried the specimens to the officer in charge, who ordered him to conceal or throw them away, as, if the story came to the knowledge of the soldiers, it would cause a stampede. At that time Bridger was an old man but still hearty and vigorous, residing on a farm in Jackson county, Mo. Traced to its course it was found that Captain Reynolds' expedition had been ordered to explore the headwaters of the Yellowstone, Missouri, and Columbia rivers, and passing through the Black Hills, en route, one day after having traveled a long distance, Bridger dismounted from his horse at a small, clear stream and stooped to drink

assistance he has rendered us will far more than compensate for the value of the stolen property; but his method of collecting his pay was peculiarly Indian, and hardly to be justified by civilized law or the code of natural honesty.

"Although it is certain that the Indians are watching our movements and doubtless our guide has joined them, I cannot yet believe that they intend hostilities; but for reasons of prudence, and to guard against possibilities, I have ordered the guard to be doubled."

Buffalo became very inquisitive on July 21, coming boldly up to the train. "Three large bulls charged down upon us at one point on the march, to the great alarm of one of the escort, who dropped his gun and raising his hands, exclaimed in all the accents of mortal terror: 'Elephants! elephants! my God! I did not know that there were elephants in this country!' On another occasion as a band was passing close by the train one of the six-mule teams started in full pursuit and was with great difficulty checked.

"We are now within a mile or two of the drainage of Powder River and as soon as we shall have passed the crest before us we will be out of the Sioux or Dakota country. The fires still continue in the distance, but no Indians have made their appearance, and their promise to permit us to pass through unmolested has been unbroken. Except for purposes of communication with our Indian guide, the interpreter has been useless.

"My American guide, Bridger, is now on familiar ground and appears to be entirely at home in this country. I therefore anticipate no difficulty in dispensing with the services of our fugitive Indian. . . . This entire district is totally unfit for the home of the white man, and indeed it seems to have been deserted by the

of its crystal water. While in this position his attention was attracted by the curious appearance of what seemed to be a lot of small yellow pebbles. Though familiar with the color of gold, it had never occurred to him that the precious metal existed in that locality, but his curiosity impelled him to scoop out a handful of the stuff, which he exhibited to Dr. Hayden and Captain Reynolds. Both at once pronounced it pure gold, and inquired where he found it. When told, Reynolds became greatly excited, and fearing the effect upon his men, insisted that Bridger should throw it away, and under no circumstances permit the discovery to be known, as the knowledge that gold existed there in such abundance and so easy of access, would cause his men to desert.

"Bridger, in relating the circumstance, stated that since his first discovery of the yellow metal in the Black Hills, he had found it at other places in the same region. But he cautioned people against going there except in strong, well armed parties for defense against the Sioux, to whom the hills belonged, and who were very numerous and would naturally resist the invasion of their territory. But the fires had been lighted and all warnings of danger produced no other effect than to stimulate emigration. One might as well attempt to check the force of a tornado by willing it, as to stop a tide of gold hunters when once set in motion. Soon after the publication of Custer's report, and the interview with Bridger, the columns began to march from the north, east, south and west toward the new Eldorado."

Indians. . . . Several grizzly bears have been started by the party, and scattered bands of buffalo have been seen roaming among the barren hills as if searching for food."

Little Powder River was reached on July 25th, but the buffalo herds had so depleted the grass that forage for the mules was secured "by hewing down cottonwood trees and allowing the animals to feed upon the bark. This they did with apparent relish, and the branches were peeled as thoroughly as it could have been done by hand. This is an expedient that is frequently resorted to by the Indians when the grass fails or is covered by snow; and Bridger asserts that in case of necessity, animals can be subsisted upon this bark through an entire winter."

Frequent gully crossings, and the interminable sage obstructed and retarded progress greatly. On July 30 Raynolds writes: "The valley of the stream is continually becoming narrower, and Bridger declares that it will be impossible to follow it much farther. The bluffs also commence to look very formidable, and as I hope to have the Yellowstone explored next season, I have almost determined to accept Bridger's advice and strike across the country for Fort Sarpy, the Fur Company's trading house on the Yellowstone. By so doing we shall obtain some knowledge of the regions back from the river, which cannot be procured by simply following the Powder to its mouth, and then ascending the valley of the Yellowstone."

Sunday, July 31, 1859. "The day was spent with the customary religious observances. I find that the entire party eagerly anticipate throughout the week the welcome rest of the Sabbath, and upon Monday morning our labors are resumed with renewed vigor, an illustration of the physical advantages of this heaven-appointed day of rest."

August 1. "After reaching camp, Bridger started in search of a route across the hills towards Tongue River. We are now within 40 or 50 miles of the mouth of the Powder, and the character of the stream cannot change materially in that distance, and its further exploration is comparatively useless. It is, moreover, absolutely essential that we should as soon as possible, enter a region better provided with grass for the benefit of our animals, and I hope to do so by crossing the hills.

"Bridger returned late at night after a six-hours' ride and makes a rather discouraging report, but thinks we will be able to succeed in at least crossing the Mizpah. From that point we shall be compelled to make a second examination to ascertain the most feasible route to Tongue River.

"August 2, 1859. I left camp before the train in company with the guide with the purpose of looking for a route to the Mizpah, and a march of six miles brought us to the Creek.

"August 3, 1859. After encamping yesterday the guide and both the topographers started in advance to ascertain the best route

by which to leave the valley. They went in different directions, but all agreed upon a single road as the only one that would prove feasible. . . . We halted several times with the view of finding a better route, but repeated disappointments testified to the excellence of the original judgment of our guide and the topographers." The bad lands or washed lands proved very troublesome, and the stock became much jaded as the party neared Tongue River.

"Friday, August 5. The stream upon which we are encamped is called by Bridger, Pumpkin Creek, taking its name from a species of wild gourd that is said to be found on its banks." The party arrived at Tongue River on that day. The region was devoid of grass, and cottonwoods were again substituted for forage.

"The point of junction of Tongue River and the Yellowstone was pointed out by Bridger as we passed along, and as it is not more than twelve or fifteen miles distant, the Yellowstone cannot be correctly located upon our maps by about fifteen miles. Bridger now advises that we travel up Tongue River some distance before crossing to the west, for the purpose of avoiding the bluffs on the Yellowstone. This is not in accordance with my preconceived plan, but I shall accept his advice out of deference to his remarkable knowledge of the country.

"Sunday, August 7. The day was spent in camp with the usual service, the firing of three shots from a revolver answering for the church bell of civilization.

"Monday, August 8. Our march today was short and still up the valley of Tongue River. . . . The valley here is very narrow, and Bridger calls it the canyon of Tongue River. . . . A magnificent buck elk was shot just after encamping, being the first of that species of game yet seen. His horns were about four feet long and still in the velvet. The flesh is not considered as great a delicacy as that of the buffalo, but it is a change, and of course agreeable.

"August 9. We this morning left Tongue River and started across the hills to the westward. . . . Near the summit we found a few stunted pines, out of which, as I was riding in advance of the train, I started an enormous grizzly bear with her cubs.

"After reaching the summit we traveled for some five miles over a high undulating prairie, which drained into the Yellowstone. . . . The ravines on each side of us were impassable, and the selection of the road proved Bridger's excellence as a guide.

"After reaching camp (August 10 on the Rosebud), Bridger examined the country to the west for several miles, and reports a good road for that distance, but seems uncertain as to its continuance. If our vague information relative to the position of Fort Sarpy is correct we should reach that post this week.

"August 11. . . . I am becoming very anxious to reach Fort Sarpy and the Yellowstone as our mules are rapidly breaking down, and I assume that there we shall obtain better pasturage. If

good grass can be found tomorrow I shall halt over Saturday and Sunday, and devote the time to procuring more definite knowledge of our exact locality. Bridger calls the stream we are now upon Emmel's Fork."

Dr. F. V. Hayden, geologist, had departed for Wolf mountains in such a state of scientific obsession as to neglect to obtain permission. He had not yet returned on Saturday, August 13, and the company halted and an exploring party headed by James Bridger went in quest of the Yellowstone River. Hayden returned, happy in having examined the mountains, but precipitated an order upon all, that no one should thereafter be absent over night without express permission.

"In the afternoon the party returned from the Yellowstone, having reached it by traveling some twelve miles. Their report of the road is by no means favorable, and far worse, they have seen no indication of the passage up of the boats with our provisions. We have now, however, the advantage of knowing our location, with the power of determining our future actions accordingly.

"Years have elapsed since our guide (Bridger) passed through this special region, and he has forgotten some of the minutæ, though he seems perfectly familiar with its general features. We are all totally ignorant of the site of the Sarpy trading house, as it has only been built within the last few years and since any of the expedition visited this country.

"Sunday, August 14. . . . Large fires are visible in the Wolf mountains this afternoon, probably the signals of Indians who are undoubtedly watching our movements, although they have not yet showed themselves."

August 15th. . . . "From the summit of the hill we obtained our first view of the Yellowstone valley itself, of which over fifty square miles was visible, literally black with buffalo, grazing in an enormous herd whose numbers defy computation, but must be estimated by hundreds of thousands. We found the distance from the foot of the hills to the water about three miles. Wood, water and grass were here abundant.

"There are no evidences of the passage of the boats at this point and as we are in some doubt as to whether we are above or below the station for which they are bound (Fort Sarpy), I have organized two small parties, the first to ascend the valley as far as the mouth of the Big Horn, and the second to descend until they obtain some information of the whereabouts of our supplies, or until their own provisions fail.

"August 16. . . . As I hope to have an opportunity of sending down the river by Major Schoonover, agent for the Crows, who is to come up in the boats with their annuities, I have set all hands at work making copies of the notes and repacking all articles that we wish to be relieved of, such as geological and other speci-

mens, in order that we may reduce our baggage to the smallest possible compass. I also wish to have a field map completed to send back, that in case of accident some record of the work accomplished may be preserved.

"This is the first actual halt made since leaving Fort Pierre, so that for lack of opportunity we are materially behind in this class of work. All our wagons and carts are emptied, their contents are being thoroughly overhauled, and invoices are being made of the stock on hand. We have work of this description sufficient to occupy all the party for several days, so that our halt is beneficial for other reasons than the rest afforded the animals.

"August 17. . . . Two Crow Indians came into camp about 3 p. m. being the first human beings outside of the party seen for fifty days. They report having passed Lieutenant Maynadier and his party this morning, and state that the boat with our supplies was at the mouth of Tongue River fifteen days since, in which case it should have reached this point by this time. Their village of one hundred lodges is two days' march behind them, and they have come down to receive their annuities.

"August 18. . . . Lieutenant Maynadier and party arrived about noon. As it is possible that Mr. Snowden's party may have passed the boats without seeing them, I have engaged the Indians who are yet with us, to go down the river and carry a letter to Mr. Meldrum, the agent of the American Fur Company, who is expected up in them. Our hunter finds no difficulty in abundantly supplying us with meat, and in a short time today killed seven buffaloes. Men with carts are sent out to bring in the choice pieces.

"August 19. The Indians left camp early this morning for the boat. About 10 a. m. a band of thirty or forty savages were seen coming up the river and proved to be Crows, headed by Two-Face, a sub-chief, who rode into camp in full court costume, announcing his name by the expressive procedure of touching his face and holding up two fingers. He calmly took temporary possession of the largest tent, making himself completely at home. He had supposed that it was my quarters, judging from its size that it belonged to the commander, a mistake that I was in no haste to correct. He soon discovered his error, however, and transferred his hospitality (the only term for his general appropriation of things) to my tent. From him I learned that his band had left the boat the day previous and that Mr. Snowden and his party were close at hand.

"The latter arrived about noon, bringing with him Major Schoonover the Indian agent. Mr. Snowden met the boats forty-one miles below (by land) and reported that it would require five or six days for them to reach our camp." To expedite the movement of the boats, Captain Reynolds dispatched men and animals to assist. Trouble had already been experienced with pestering

Sioux Indians, who "informed Major Schoonover that a band of 350 picked warriors had started to intercept and attack my expedition. If the story is true their courage failed, for their distant signal fires have been the only evidences of their neighborhood.

"August 22. The Crows are encamped in large numbers a mile or two up the river and in close vicinity to camp, and are becoming very troublesome. Like all Indians they are importunate beggars, and about camp they take constant and the most disagreeable liberties, thronging into our tents, rolling their filthy bodies up in our blankets, and prying into everything accessible. Their personal uncleanness is disgusting and their bodies are covered with vermin. They have no ideas of chastity and greater general degradation could be with difficulty imagined. The men take pride in appearing in all the tawdry finery they can obtain. The common dress is woollen clothing, such as pantaloons, skirts and hats purchased from the traders, blankets (which are plenty) and buffalo skins forming the outer covering.

"The full state dress, used by the chiefs and great warriors on extraordinary occasions, is quite imposing, consisting of moccasins ornamented with beads, leggins of skins embroidered also with beads and porcupine quills dyed the most brilliant colors, and a large outer covering somewhat resembling the Mexican *serapa*, but made of skin and richly decorated. Ermine skins are highly prized by them, and almost invariably the *serapa* is fringed with them. Vermillion is freely used as a war paint, and it is not uncommon to see the entire face as brilliant as the best Chinese pigment can make it.

"The chief of the lower band, Two Bears, wore moccasins consisting of the paws of a grizzly bear, with the claws and horny portion of the foot preserved. Eagle feathers are used to ornament the head and a Crow glories in his long hair, which is worn straight down the back, frequently reaching to the knees. This is filled with gum forming a compact mass, and is generally dotted over with white spots of paint. Only in extreme grief—mourning for friends, etc.—is the hair ever cut. A more senseless display of grief common among them is to gash the forehead and allow the blood to flow over the face, remaining there until worn off by time or obliterated by dirt.

"As among all savages the women are mere slaves of the men, doing all the menial service. A case in point caused considerable amusement in our party. A young Indian, almost a mere lad, with a stout and fine looking squaw wife, has pitched his lodge a short distance from camp upon the opposite side of a branch of the river. In all their visits to camp the wife carries her liege-lord upon her shoulders through the water with the most obsequious devotion.

"August 23. Soon after dinner today Lieutenant Maynadier returned to camp, and with him came Mr. Robert Meldrum, the agent of the Fur Company, who is in charge of the long expected boats, which are still some twenty miles below. It has been found

almost impossible to navigate the Yellowstone, the water being too low, although the vessels, which are batteaux, draw only eighteen inches. At Mr. Meldrum's suggestion I shall send down a number of the wagons tomorrow to receive a part of the freight and thus lighten the loads.

"The afternoon and evening were spent in conversation with Mr. Meldrum, obtaining information from him with reference to the most feasible routes before us and the peculiarities of life among the Indians. He is undoubtedly the best living authority in regard to the Crows, outside of the tribe, having spent over thirty years in their country, during that time visiting the regions of civilization but once, and on that occasion spending only 19 days in St. Louis. He has long lived among the Indians, assuming their dress and habits, and by his skill and success in leading their war parties has acquired distinction, rising to the second post of authority in the tribe. He, of course, speaks their language perfectly, and says that it has become more natural to him than his mother tongue. I noted the alacrity with which he ceased speaking English whenever an opportunity offered.

"August 25. The wagons that were sent to meet the boats returned this evening with full loads and there are now hopes that we shall be able to resume our march from this point in a few days. The day was chiefly spent in writing and computing. The Indians, save two or three lodges, all left today and ascended the river to Fort Sarpy where they will await the arrival of the boats with their annuities."

The long-delayed boats arrived on the 26th but their cargoes were so badly mixed that Captain Reynolds allowed them to proceed to Fort Sarpy before claiming his goods. Leaving camp on the 29th, the short ten mile journey to Fort Sarpy was completed by ten o'clock. The only known description of this out-of-the-way post is given by Reynolds:

"We found the trading house situated in the timber on what during high water would be an island, a channel now dry passing to the south of it. The fort is an enclosure about 100 feet square of upright cottonwood logs 15 feet high, the outer walls also forming the exterior of a row of low cabins which are occupied as dwelling houses, store-houses, shops and stables. The roofs of these structures are nearly flat, and formed of timber covered to a depth of a foot with dirt, thus making an excellent parapet for purposes of defense, the preparations for resistance of possible attacks being further perfected by loopholes in the upper part of the outer row of logs. The entrance is through a heavy gate which is always carefully closed at night. No flanking arrangements whatever exist, and the fort is thus a decidedly primitive affair. It is amply sufficient, however, to protect its inmates against the schemes and the martial science of the Indians."

CHAPTER XLVI

FORT SARPY TO DEER CREEK

CAPTAIN RAYNOLDS called the Crow Chiefs together in a conference before leaving Fort Sarpy, for the purpose of acquainting them with his own plans, and with the government's interest in their welfare. The meeting was delayed several hours, however, awaiting the capturing of a missing horse belonging to a chief, that being a much more important matter, Raynolds ironically remarks. Chief Red Bear addressed the Captain reluctantly, having been attired only in mountain garb; Two Bears persuaded him his court dress and paraphernalia were not essential.

"Brother, we are glad to see you," said Red Bear. "We are glad to hear from the Great Father. The Absaroukas (Crows) have always been the friend of the whites and have always treated them well; we have never killed a white man. We are perfectly willing you should pass through our country. You can go without being molested. Should you, however, wish to stop in the country and build houses we should object to your doing so. We are a small tribe. You see here the most of us. We have enemies on all sides; the Sioux on the east, the Blackfeet on the west, and they are making war on us all the time. We want to be let alone and we want our great father to protect us."

Settling amicably with both the Indians and the trader, the Raynolds party moved up the valley of the Yellowstone on August 31, continuing the journey over a sandy trail on September 1, to a narrows which halted their progress. The Captain writes in his journal:

"At this point I drove ahead with Bridger, and from a convenient ridge obtained a view of the country before us. The prospect was decidedly inauspicious, the whole surface of the adjacent hills being cut up into deep gorges and the chances for passable roads appearing to steadily decrease. Under such circumstances I ordered a search for water with a view to encamping, and ultimately an oozing spring was found in a neighboring valley, which by digging, yielded enough for the men but left none for the animals. Bridger, however, was more successful, and found an abundance of water in a valley some two miles distant, to which the herd was driven.

"Bridger reports that our route tomorrow will be into and down the valley of Tullock's Fork, a branch of the Big Horn, which we are approaching, and as I propose that Lieutenant Maynadier shall go up that stream I gave him his orders, that he may make his arrangements to leave us when we strike the creek."

On the morrow, at a creek leading into Tullock's Fork, Maynadier left the main party, which continued on toward the Big Horn where an encampment was made. Mr. Wilson turned back in search of a missing horse, which he found at Fort Sarpy finally, and did not rejoin the party until September 3; he had been the guest of Chief Red Bear while gone, and reported that the entire Crow village of one hundred and thirty lodges was following, intending to accompany the Raynolds party, uninvited, to the head of Powder River.

"This is decidedly overdoing the matter of amicable relations," says the Captain's diary. "A single guide would be of invaluable service but the continual company of 500 savages of all ages and both sexes devoid of any strict ideas of property, expecting to be allowed free access to our stores, and with a general friendship for our portable articles and for our persons, can hardly be esteemed one of the leading advantages to be derived from amity with the aborigines.

"The guide (Bridger) states that the best route up the valley of the Big Horn will lie for some distance at least on the west side of the river. Search has therefore been made during the day for a good crossing and one has been found above camp which will answer although rather deep." Owing to the division of the party, Captain Raynolds explains the necessity for drafting teamsters and assistants as officers of the guard. On the 5th he writes: "The promise of our Indian friends to overtake and accompany us has not yet been fulfilled, and our grief thereat is not wholly inconsolable."

The route continued up the valley of the Big Horn on September 6. "About 11 o'clock a herd of buffalo was discovered, and Bridger's skill with the rifle soon added two cows to our larder, in which fresh meat had for some time been a rarity." An encampment was pitched a short distance below the mouth of the Little Big Horn, but on the 7th progress was made up the Big Horn valley again, encamping within plain sight of the Big Horn mountains.

"Thursday, September 8. . . . Nine miles from camp we crossed a small stream coming in from the east which Bridger, who seems to know every square mile of this region, calls Grass creek. Above this the road was a little rougher, but still good. About fifteen miles from camp we crossed a small stream that Bridger calls Soap Creek, and two miles above this we pitched our tents for the night upon the banks of the river, where we had a plentiful supply of grass though but little wood."

In a preliminary report summarizing the results of this campaign, Captain Raynolds says: "The peculiar topography of this region, whereby the same river flowing to the north, canyons twice through the same mountain range, is well set forth and made plain in the rough language of the guide, Bridger, who said: 'The Big Horn mountains are just the shape of a horseshoe, and the Big Horn River cuts through both sides, dividing the heel from the toe.'

"The lower canyon must present a series of views of great magnificence. The gorge cannot be less than three thousand feet in depth, and whether the banks are sloping or perpendicular, the scenery must be grand in the extreme. Bridger, who claims to have once passed through on a raft, declares that for mingled sublimity and beauty this canyon is unequaled by any that he has ever seen.

"From our camp (September 8, 1859) we can distinctly trace the Big Horn up its valley to this immense wall rising over three thousand feet in height, and crossing the course of the stream at right angles. The river here is large, deep, and nearly three hundred feet in width. . . . Its remarkable canyon is famous throughout the West, and as from this point our route would bear off southwestward (sic) towards the Platte, it was decided to visit this great natural curiosity this afternoon. . . . The spot at the mouth of the canyon is unsurpassed in this region, and I venture the prediction that not many decades will elapse before it shall become a thriving and important point on a road connecting the Platte with the Three Forks of the Missouri.

"The canyon is one of the most remarkable sights upon the continent. The river here narrows to a width of less than one hundred and fifty feet, and bursts out through reddish tinted walls of perpendicular rock over three hundred feet in height. Its current at this point is slow, but undoubtedly its course among the mountains is marked by successions of rapids and cascades.

"We pushed up its banks until we reached the impassable wall of perpendicular rock, and after affording time for sketching, and geological observation, returned to camp. Bridger claims to have descended the lower canyon of the Big Horn some years since upon a raft during his service as a trapper with the American Fur Company (Ashley's men, August, 1825?) and his descriptions of the grandeur of the scenery along its banks are glowing and remarkable.

"He portrays a series of rugged canyons, the river forming (sic) among jagged rocks between lofty overhanging precipices, whose threatening arches shut out all sunlight, interspersed with narrow valleys, teeming with luxuriant verdure, through whose pleasant banks the stream flows as placidly as in its broad valleys below. The conformation of the country—my measurements showing the mountains to be over three thousand feet in height—render all these marvels natural, and if it were possible I should be glad to attempt the exploration of the canyon myself."

The Raynolds train left the Big Horn on September 9, going towards the south up Soap Creek. Three picket ropes were cut that night and one mule stolen by an Indian who was too sly for the guards. By early afternoon of the 10th Grass Creek was reached. "We found it was entitled to the name Bridger gave it, for the grass was excellent upon its banks, and the temptation to halt was diffi-

cult to resist." There was need for advancing, however, to a distant camp toward nightfall.

"In my explorations in search of a camp," Raynolds says, "I discovered in a thicket on the banks of the stream the finest elk I had ever seen, and after encamping informed Bridger of the fact. He started in search of the game, and just before dark returned and reported that he had shot the animal about a mile from camp, and declared it to be one of the largest he had ever met. The head and horns were cut off to enable them to put his body in the cart, and as it lay stretched on the grass it seemed longer than that of any mule in our herd. We had not the facilities for weighing the carcass whole, but after it had been dressed according to the requirements of the commissary department, with the neck and shanks off, the four quarters aggregated six hundred and forty pounds. The head, horns and hide were also weighed, and the total showed that the live weight of the animal was over one thousand pounds. The supply of fresh meat was very acceptable, as we have had less than usual of late.

"Sunday, September 11. Doctor Hayden and Mr. Snowden wished to visit a bluff at the pass of the Little Big Horn this morning but as Bridger was very decided as to the danger of parties going abroad alone while there were evidences of the vicinity of Indians, and as I could not encourage unnecessary work on the Sabbath, the project was abandoned."

While crossing the valley and the river of the Little Big Horn on the 12th, the party feasted on wild plums; and while gathering fruit, James Stephenson was attacked and knocked down by a large female grizzly bear, but the bear retreated at sight of reinforcements.

"A grand hunt was at once commenced," Raynolds explains, "by almost every member of the party, but it soon assumed a ludicrous phase. The sportsmen attempted to obtain a shot at the bear, but the moment they came in sight through the bushes she would make a vigorous charge and scatter the crowd, beating immediately a hasty retreat to her lair. After this alternate hunt of the bear by the hunters and the hunters by the bear had been repeated several times she failed to respond to another approach and some of the more daring of the party crept into the edge of the bushes to reconnoiter. They failed to find her, and at this juncture she was discovered crossing the crest of a neighboring hill with three cubs, just out of rifle range. Inasmuch as she had justly earned her right of escape, her exit was heartily cheered.

"Bears are very numerous, more than a dozen having been seen in the course of the day's march, and one, a yearling cub, was brought down by Bridger's rifle. Elk, deer and antelope have also been seen in abundance, and we can now understand why the Indians cling with such tenacity to their country. No buffalo have been

seen today, but the number of skeletons visible upon all sides show that at times they are found here in large numbers."

The train was well over the watershed into Tongue River drainage for the encampment of September 13, though several upsets of carts and wagons worked some delay. "While Bridger was in advance of the train today he discovered five or six Indians in the distance, apparently watching our march," Raynolds recalls. "They are doubtless the fellows who stole the mule on Friday night, and are now seeking opportunities to commit other depredations. Our camp has therefore been selected with special reference to safety, the river protecting it in front, while upon the other sides we have an open prairie, which they will not probably be bold enough to cross with hostile intent." This arrangement, we may safely assume, was in deference to Bridger's judgment.

But redskinned thieves got away with several minor articles from the camp, due, Raynolds complains, to the carelessness of the night guard. The course on the 14th lay across Tongue River, and the campsite was on Goose Creek. A beautiful country was crossed on the 15th, a scene being described as follows:

"While returning to the train my first view of the camp struck me as one of most singular beauty. The dark and varied outlines of the mountains formed the background to a landscape of wide extent and attractive features. In the center, the circle of white tents and wagon covers reflected the bright rays of the sun, and the smoke of camp fires, the groups of men, and the grazing animals, added the charm of busy life to the scene; while upon either hand the striking contrasts were mellowed down by gently sloping hills clad with verdure of all the picturesque tints of autumn. The canvas of the painter has perpetuated few finer scenes real or ideal."

The encampment site on the 16th was on the divide between Tongue and Powder Rivers. A prowling Indian got behind the guard, and on being surprised, shot the guard rather seriously and roused the whole camp; and awakened them to the necessity of greater vigilance. About noon on Sunday, September 18, a party of Crow Indians, led by a Spaniard who had been met at Fort Sarpy, came into camp. They attributed the thefts, Indian fashion, to another tribe, the Blackfeet, but admitted some young Crows were abroad also. Raynolds was convinced that the culprits were then and there in camp, but entertained them with coffee and hard bread to minimize trouble. He reports an interesting practice.

"The Indians located themselves on the bank of the river and during the afternoon I had an opportunity of witnessing a curious spectacle, namely, an aboriginal sweat bath, taken by four of the savages. The *modus operandi* was as follows: They first erected a frame work some eight feet in diameter and five feet high, of long willows planted in the ground, bent in proper form and wattled to-

gether with great care and regularity, resembling a large open basket, inverted, and having an entrance sufficiently large to admit one person. A hole twelve or fourteen inches in diameter, and eight inches deep was then excavated in the center and all the dirt carefully removed. Around this a shallow trench was dug as also four small trenches entering it at right angles from the circumference. Willow boughs were also carefully laid around the hole and the whole of the structure was thickly covered with buffalo robes and blankets.

"A fire was then kindled and a large number of stones heated. These preparations having been completed, four men entered the bath, the attendants passed in the stones, and vessels of water, and then carefully closed the entrance. Steam was generated in this close apartment by throwing water upon the stones, so effectually that its inmates were compelled to call three times for fresh air, which was supplied by the attendants making a small opening at the door. The men remained in this bath some fifteen or twenty minutes, when they emerged dripping with steam and perspiration. Three went at once to the cold mountain stream and washed off, while the fourth contented himself with laying on the ground until he was cooled. A more effective method of taking a vapor bath could be hardly be desired, and I learned it is a favorite remedy with the Crows for almost all the ills to which savage flesh is heir.

"In the afternoon an elk was seen some distance below camp, and two of the Indians at once mounted their horses, and giving chase, soon succeeded in bringing it down. As night approached the savages moved back of our location, and after dark burned torches for some time on each side of their own campfires. These were undoubtedly intended as signals to others in the distance, and consequently excited considerable suspicion, but they insisted that it was only for amusement, and we of course were destitute of all power of proving the contrary.

"The Spaniard's explanation of his presence with the band is that he was sent by Richard at Platte Bridge to bring the Crows there to trade, and that these fourteen are all that he was able to induce to accompany him. His appearance is not especially in his favor, but I have entrusted him with a letter to be mailed at Platte Bridge.

"Monday, September 19. . . . Passing over the ridge from the Clear Fork of Powder River we entered the valley of Lake De Smedt, so-called from a Catholic priest, who has spent many years among the Indian tribes of this country. It is a small pond, some three or four miles long, lying between the branches of Clear Fork, one or two small streams emptying into it, but no outlet was discovered, and Bridger and Meldrum agree in saying that it has none. The barometer indicated that the pond was some feet lower than the streams upon either side, but this is not sufficiently marked

to attract the attention of the casual observer, and I therefore attribute the frequency of its mention as something remarkable to the fact that it is the only sheet of water of the kind that we have met during our summer's wandering."

Pumpkin Butte was sighted on the 20th, and the evening encampment was on a tributary of Powder River which Bridger called Sandy Creek. The route was still southward on the 21st, though difficulties arose both with the road and with the men.

"About five miles from camp we crossed a small brook only a foot or two wide but very miry, giving on this account much trouble," writes the Captain. "In crossing it a member of the party, Mr. Wilson, refused to aid me in lifting one of the carts from the slough, upon the ground that he had not been assigned to this special class of duty by the Secretary of War. I promptly released him from duty of any kind, by discharging him upon the spot, only permitting him to remain with us until we should reach the Platte road. This disagreeable occurrence was the legitimate result of the presence of men who simply owe their connection with the party to the order of high authority and not to the needs of the expedition, and are therefore more guided by motives of selfishness than a sense of duty.

"While enroute today we were joined by three Indians who came with us to camp, and were there reinforced by three others. They proved to be Arapahoes, and among them were Little Owl, one of their head chiefs, and Friday, also a chief, who speaks English quite well, having spent some time while a boy in St. Louis. They told us that their whole village of one hundred and eighty lodges was within six or seven miles, and they also brought some fresh meat, for which we exchanged bacon. This, with a cup of coffee and a few biscuits, seemed to make them well satisfied with their visit.

"Friday informs me that Major Twiss, the Indian agent on the upper Platte, has letters for us, and this assurance is the nearest approach to news from our homes that we have enjoyed since leaving the Missouri. It is at least a gratification to know that there are letters for us somewhere, although weeks may elapse before they shall reach us."

A heavy rainstorm hindered the progress of the train on the 22d, and "a thick fog closed around us, shutting out all view of the country and greatly embarrassing our selection of a route, even the mountains fading from our sight in the thick mist. Our guide (Bridger), however, did not falter, but pointed out our course with every mark of complete self-confidence, and as truly as if on a broad turnpike in clear weather and amid familiar landmarks."

The nooning on the 24th was on the banks of Powder River, whose gullied and washed banks betoken the bad lands, similar to those encountered farther down this stream. "There can be no doubt of the truth of Bridger's statement that the same general

features prevail throughout the whole extent of the stream, and in this case the non-arrival of Maynadier and party is fully explained. I shall await them at this point, as per agreement.

On the 26th while awaiting Lieutenant Maynadier, Doctor Hayden, Mr. Snowden and Mr. Schoonborn left on a short excursion to the mountains, while "Bridger and myself turned our faces down stream to try and obtain some information in regard to Lieutenant Maynadier. After a ride of about fifteen miles we came to the ruins of some old trading posts, known as the Portuguese Houses, from the fact that many years ago they were erected by a Portuguese trader named Antonio Mateo.

"They are now badly dilapidated, and only one side of the pickets remains standing. These, however, are of hewn logs and from their character it is evident that the structures were very strongly built. Bridger recounted a tradition that at one time this post was besieged by the Sioux for forty days, resisting successfully to the last alike the strength and ingenuity of their assaults, and the appearance of the ruins renders the story not only credible but probable. I shaved off the pickets at two or three places, and wrote on the bright surface information as to our whereabouts for the benefit of Lieutenant Maynadier, if he should chance to pass in this direction, and then, after an unsuccessful reconnaissance of the surrounding country from the summit of a convenient hill, we returned to camp."

On Tuesday, September 27, "Bridger made a short excursion today towards the Platte to select a route, but returned with a rather unfavorable report. The course recommended I judge to be anything but direct, but as he strenuously insists upon its superior feasibility I shall follow his advice. . . . Bridger and Doctor Hayden will tomorrow make a second reconnaissance down stream in search of Lieutenant Maynadier, and if they are unsuccessful I have decided to push on with my detachment without further delay, sending a guide back to find and bring up the others, if it shall be possible.

"September 28, a dark and lowering sky did not prevent the departure of the down-river party, consisting of Lieutenant Smith, Doctor Hayden, Bridger, and Stephenson. They left camp with the expectation of being absent three days." Thursday, September 29, was spent in camp, computing, making notes and so forth.

"At 5 p. m. we were visited by a war party of eleven Indians on foot, who proved to be Arapahoes on their way to join another band of their own tribe, or a body of Sioux, in a horse stealing expedition among the Utes, with whom they are now at war. I may remark in passing that horse stealing appears to be one of the grand objective points of Indian campaigning. They were each armed with a rifle and all carried lariats for the purpose of securing their plunder. As usual I furnished them with supper to avoid arousing

any unnecessary ill will, and at its close they repaid us by one of their native concerts, the music of which may be soothing to the savage breast, but is decidedly irritating to the civilized ear.

"They formed a circle about the fire standing shoulder to shoulder and then sang in a species of aggravatingly monotonous strain, marking time by a swaying motion of their bodies, at intervals enlivening the proceedings by ferocious yells, preceded by short, sharp barks like those of an angry dog. This entertainment having been closed, the Indians proceeded to comfortably locate themselves about our campfires where they now lie, to all external appearance, in a state of supreme content."

September 30. . . . "The day was spent in camp awaiting the return of the reconnoitering party, who arrived about 5 p. m. without any tidings of Lieutenant Maynadier. They report that they reached a point not far from 50 miles from camp, and state that a train would be compelled to travel much farther to pass over the same ground. This proves that if Lieutenant Maynadier is coming by Powder River, as he expected, he is so far behind that he cannot join us for several days, possibly for a week. I have therefore decided to push on myself to the Platte, and if he is not heard from before, send after him from that point. My party is too small for another division, and my animals are too much exhausted for such a journey, even if I felt justified in sparing the men.

"October 1. We left camp at 7:30 a. m. for the Platte, our route lying west of direct, the guide claiming that he knows the country perfectly and that this course is indispensable to securing a good road." So anxious were they to reach the Platte that Sunday, October 2, was the first Sabbath on which a march had been made, much to the confusion of the men who thus lost trace of the week days. The course continued up the Powder River, but gullies were numerous and the train moved only about a mile an hour; the travel on the 3rd being no improvement. A canyon soon enforced a departure from the stream, and "as Bridger says we will not find water for nearly ten miles I ordered the train to halt, although we had advanced only seven and one-quarter miles.

"Tuesday, October 4. Our route this morning was directly over the hills, and thence parallel to the stream. The first mile or two was a gradual ascent over hard ground and with good traveling then for five miles. The road ran along a level plateau, whence it at last descended by an abrupt hill into the valley. Here we encountered one of the few evidences of the existence of industry among the Indians. We were following a trail which was plainly of much importance.

"The steep descent which is here met, had been originally rendered nearly impassable by an immense number of boulders, but these had been carefully and systematically piled up in low pyra-

mids on the sides, leaving a road of comparative excellence. Bridger claims, however, that this was never finished as a single undertaking, as no Indians would have been guilty of such a sensible work, and his theory is that separate parties have consumed a long series of years in accomplishing this result."

The valley below this Indian highway, "is a bright gem in a rough mountain setting, and apparently fulfills all the conditions of the 'Happy Valley' of Rasselas, save the inhabitants. A single Indian grave, the body deposited on an elevated platform, was the only evidence of even the presence of Indians at any time within its rocky walls."

Passing over the watershed from the Powder to the Big Horn drainage on the 6th, in a few miles the train entered the valley of the Platte. The country was barren, however, and flanking parties were sent out to search for water. "The supply of grass was then most miserable, and not a stick of wood was visible. Sage and buffalo chips answered, however, for fuel, and we were glad to break a fast of over thirteen hours." The route continued very difficult, and extremely hard on the animals and men.

On Monday the 10th some better forage was found but "in several places the soil was covered to the depth of several inches with a white salt, or as Bridger calls it, alkali. This is an impure soda, although in some places it is found of sufficient purity to be used for culinary purposes. After encamping I rode in advance to ascertain our exact whereabouts, and soon came in sight of the valley of the Platte, the Red Buttes and the Laramie Hills. It was evident that another day's march would bring us to the Platte road"; information which Bridger undoubtedly made out of the view.

"Tuesday, October 11, 1859. As the train was leaving camp this morning I started with Dr. Hayden and Wilson for the Platte bridge (one mile west of Casper). We followed down the stream upon which we had been encamped some distance, finally turning to the right and after riding for about six miles reached the Platte road, near the Red Buttes. Before starting I had in my ignorance asked Bridger if there was any danger of crossing the road without knowing it. I now understand fully his surprise as it is as marked as any turnpike in the East. It is hard, dry and dusty, and gave evidence of the immense amount of travel that passes over it. Indeed, we had not followed it a mile before we came upon an ambulance with ladies in it, bound for the States, and we were very seldom out of sight of some vehicle on this great highway.

"The fact of again reaching a regular road appeared to impart new life even to our jaded horses, and we rode on at a rapid rate until we reached Richard's trading post at the Platte Bridge, having traveled about eighteen miles. Here I received the pleasing news that Lieutenant Maynadier was close at our heels, on our trail, some Indians having just arrived at the Bridge who had seen his

party near the head of Powder River. I was also so fortunate as to receive a single letter, which constituted our latest news from home, though it was four months old. I learned also that a mail was waiting for us at the Indian Agency at Deer Creek (thirty miles east of Platte Bridge), and engaged Richard to send for it. I also made arrangements to get up our winter supplies from Fort Laramie; and after taking dinner under a roof off from a table, and on a stool—luxuries we had not known since leaving Fort Pierre—returned to the Red Buttes where my party was encamped, having reached that point about 1 o'clock.

"I found some evidences of our return to 'civilization' that were not so agreeable. Two neighboring houses were devoted to the sale of liquor, and a large number of the party were consequently in a state of uproariousness that had converted the camp into a bedlam, which it required great efforts on my part to subdue. The commander of the escort was invisible, and had certainly made no efforts to maintain order or enforce discipline.

"October 12. I left the party in camp today while I accompanied Bridger to look at the valley of Carson's Creek, as previously determined. As I was about departing I observed that the escort were making preparations for moving. I inquired of the officer in command what his purpose was and learned that he intended taking his command to Carson's Creek. I replied it was my wish that they should remain in camp, and accordingly gave him orders to that effect. He replied with an oath that he should do as he pleased, as I had no power to give him orders. Knowing that I certainly had not the means of enforcing my commands, I rode on to make the proposed examination, and was satisfied that the place was not such as was required, the grass being poor and the timber unsuitable for building huts. Upon my return I found my escort gone, and Lieutenant Maynadier in camp, having come on in advance of his party. . . .

"The period from October 13 to 17 was consumed in search along the Platte road for a suitable location for winter quarters. . . . We finally settled upon some unfinished houses near the Indian Agency of the upper Platte, which the agent, Major Twiss, kindly invited me to occupy (now Glenrock, Wyo.) The buildings had been commenced by the Mormons some years ago, as a way station on the route to Salt Lake, and part of them had been finished and were now occupied by Major Twiss. The others were in a half-completed state, and by taking these we were saved considerable labor and obtained far better quarters than would have otherwise been possible."

The remainder of the open season prior to winter was spent in improving the shelters, gathering supplies, and making a reconnaissance to determine the sources of the Cheyenne River. They got housed up on November 14, 1859. "From October 19 to No-

vember 3 I was engaged in a trip to and from Fort Laramie, and in procuring supplies and provisions for the winter. . . .

"I started for Laramie with a supply of provisions, my tents and a cook, taking it for granted that we should be obliged to camp out and rely upon our own commissariat for provisions, as on our journey since leaving Fort Pierre. I soon discovered my mistake, however. Houses were found every ten or fifteen miles (Pony Express stations), and I was much surprised to learn that if one would be satisfied with the accommodations they afforded, the journey could be made from the Missouri to the Pacific with reliance upon these frontier hotels, which are found about every fifteen miles along the whole route.

"The Indians were perfectly peaceable, and it was not unusual to see men riding singly along the road, though for company more than for considerations of safety, they generally traveled in parties of two or three. The Platte road is truly a national thoroughfare, and until the railroad is completed, must remain our most important channel of communication with the Pacific States. . . .

"Our log houses, although they had no floors, and only decidedly primitive roofs, were still dry and warm. These roofs consisted of logs with brush filling in the interstices and covered with a coating of clay mortar, and above all a foot or more of earth well packed. This is the common roof of the plains. A slope of about one foot vertical to five horizontal serves to shed the rain perfectly, and the amount that falls is not sufficient to wash off the dirt within one winter, as we fully proved. The winds are in fact much more destructive."

CHAPTER XLVII

THE BEGINNING OF BRIDGER'S STORIES

THE outstanding development of the Raynolds winter at Deer Creek, in the atmosphere of the mountains and the presence of many mountain men, was the incubation of the original brood of reminiscent yarns of the trappers and mountaineers. And James Bridger, personifying all that was peculiarly of the mountains, was to become not only a central figure in many of these tales by proxy, and foster father of them all in general, but the parent peacock, in fact, of many of the choicest tales in the limitless flock still flying about in mountain lore.

There were numerous activities among the idling explorers, and the mountain winter was pleasantly open and storm free; yet the fireside circles of Deer Creek, during the long winter evenings, still to this day cast a glowing halo upon the reminiscences of the West in general. Many old trappers came and went, and still many more were present in name and memory only, on these story-telling occasions, whose parts have since been rehearsed by a thousand actors.

Each of the specialists in the official party had reports to write, notes to duplicate, and maps and drawings to prepare; while astronomical observations and calculations for latitude and longitude helped to fill in most of the dates. The animals were herded from one pasture to another and the hunters were abroad almost daily, in quest of fresh meat. Bridger doubtless rotated with all parties, as his services seemed most needful, probably accompanying one detachment which went to find a better route to Powder River, and another on a geologizing journey.

A Sioux chief, One Horn, called during the winter to warn Captain Raynolds not to pass through Sioux lands again. Raynolds reminded One Horn of the treaty, and One Horn replied: "We cannot restrain our young men;

they will kill you." Raynolds explained that he planned in the spring to cross from the head of the Yellowstone to the head of the Missouri, outside of Sioux territory, but expected to reach the states via the Missouri River, through the Sioux country. One Horn warned him to keep to the east of the river, and Raynolds thus seemed all the more determined to keep as far to the west of the stream as water and grass would allow, assuring One Horn that if the party was attacked, the troops at Fort Randall, who were expecting Raynolds' arrival, would soon punish them appropriately. One Horn then accepted the situation and departed with his stomach full of the coffee and hard bread of official diplomacy.

Four German Lutheran missionaries, sent to labor among the Indians, became winter-bound and abode with the Raynolds party, serving to add interest to the encampment. Captain Raynolds wrote feelingly of them and their fate. They were unable to speak either the Indian or English tongues, and without interpreters were greatly handicapped. Later, while establishing a mission at the picturesque mouth of the canyon of the Big Horn, as suggested by Captain Raynolds, the Reverend Mr. Bryninger, in charge, was slain by the Sioux; and his companions made their way back to Iowa and reported their failure to the synod. Other events are best described by Captain Raynolds.

"I cannot pass over our winter in the mountains without mentioning the prevalent and entire disregard of the laws and regulations in regard to the traffic in ardent spirits in the Indian country. The evening after my party reached Platte road, at the Red Buttes, liquor was obtained and many of its members rendered almost uncontrollable. After we were established in winter quarters this continued to be a source of constant trouble, notwithstanding we were immediately under the eye of the Indian agent, and it was only by reminding the traders that I knew the law and should enforce it, that I was able to preserve anything like discipline in my command. The sale of liquor in this country is an evil that demands the most effective and persistent remedy."

As a preparation for spring explorations, a new escort had been ordered, and the pack saddles and bags were purchased or manufactured in camp; and as the weather permitted, the animals were broken or trained to carry the new burdens. This was no ordinary task, since Reynolds declares the Indians sold him only such animals as they could not use, or were too lazy to train for themselves.

The mail service was excellent, considering their isolation and there was much letter writing and much reading and discussing of letters and periodicals, only fifteen days from the states, and arriving faithfully each week. Of this matter Reynolds extends his remarks.

"The Pony Express was also established while we were in winter quarters, and by it we several times received interesting items of news but three days old. To this enterprise I cannot forbear paying a slight tribute in passing. The sight of a solitary horseman galloping along the road was of itself nothing remarkable, but when we remember that he was one of a series stretching across the continent, and forming a continuous chain for two thousand miles through an almost absolute wilderness, the undertaking was justly ranked among the events of the age, and the most striking triumphs of American energy.

"Notwithstanding our mail facilities, our astronomical duties, our map making, and other official duties, there were many weary hours in winter quarters, when we longed for the social enjoyments of home and civilized life. At times these were relieved by recounting incidents of adventure in life on the plains which had come to our ears, most of which were heard from the former trappers in this region, some of whom are yet to be found. From all that I hear I conclude that in the palmy days of the fur trade, before the silk hat was invented, and when the beaver was the great object of attraction, the bands of trappers in the West were little more than bands of white Indians, having their Indian wives, and all the paraphernalia of Indian life, moving from place to place, as

the beaver became scarce, and subsisting like the Indians upon the products of the country.

"Bridger says that one time he did not taste bread for seventeen years.

"Is it surprising that men leading such a life, not hearing from civilization oftener than once a year, and then only through the fur companies who send to them to get their furs, and supply them with ammunition and Indian trinkets, but who yet retained a recollection of the outer world they had left, should beguile the monotony of camp life by spinning yarns, in which each tried to excel all others, and which were repeated so often, and insisted upon so strenuously, that the narrators came to believe them most religiously.

"Some of the Munchausen tales struck me as altogether too good to be lost. One was to this effect: In many parts of the country petrification and fossils are very numerous; and as a consequence it was claimed that in some locality (I was not able to fix it definitely) a large tract of sage is perfectly petrified, with all the leaves and branches in perfect condition, the general appearance of the plain not being unlike that of the rest of the country, but all is stone, while the rabbits, sage hens, and other animals usually found in such localities, are still there, perfectly petrified, and as natural as when they were living; and more wonderful still, these petrified bushes bear the most wonderful fruit—diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, etc., as large as black walnuts, are found in abundance. 'I tell you, sir,' said one narrator, 'it is true, for I gathered a quart myself, and sent them down the country.'

"Another story runs in this wise: A party of whites were once pursued by Indians so closely that they were forced to hide during the day, and could only travel at night. In this they were greatly aided by the brilliancy of a large diamond in the face of a neighboring mountain by the light of which they traveled for three consecutive nights.

"I will end these specimen tales by one from Bridger, which partakes so decidedly of a scientific nature that it should not be omitted. He contends that near the

headwaters of the Columbia River, in the fastnesses of the mountains, there is a spring gushing forth from the rocks near the top of the mountain. The water when it issues forth is cold as ice, but it runs down over the smooth rock so far and so fast that it is *hot at the bottom.*"

The story of the petrifications has had as many variations, since that original version, as it has had narrators. It is usually attributed to Bridger. The stream that became hot at the bottom is still hot at the bottom, and was the Firehole River of Yellowstone Park. The phenomenon was a fact well known to Bridger, who was never shamed by its telling, regardless of the effect on the credulous.

Nathaniel P. Langford (67) states that on September 19, 1870, "Mr. Hedges and I forded the Firehole River a short distance below our camp. The current, as it dashed over the boulders, was swift, and taking off our boots and stockings, we selected for our place of crossing what seemed to be a smooth rock surface in the bottom of the stream, extending from shore to shore. When I reached the middle of the stream I paused a moment and turned around to speak to Mr. Hedges, who was about to enter the stream, when I discovered from the sensation of warmth under my feet I was standing upon an incrustation formed over a hot spring that had its vent in the bed of the stream. I exclaimed to Hedges: 'Here is the river which Bridger said was *hot at the bottom.*'"

CHAPTER XLVIII

RAYNOLDS MISSES YELLOWSTONE PARK

LEAVING Deer Creek winter quarters on May 8, 1860, Captain Raynolds' pack train headed westward for the Wind River country. At the Little Muddy crossing the proprietor of an insignificant bridge assessed the train \$10 for the transit of the party, which was paid, according to the ironical journal entry, as a proof that they were still within the limits of civilization. On the 11th a toll of \$50 was paid for crossing Platte Bridge, another tribute to civilization, but before the next camp was pitched a stampede of the herd and the loss and impairment of several animals gave a sense of their great isolation in the wilderness.

On the 19th the party divided, Lieutenant Maynadier and a detachment proceeding up the Platte road on the Sweetwater, thence to descend the Popo Agie, while Captain Raynolds turned into the west, under Bridger's guidance, aiming to meet Maynadier on Wind River. Raynolds encountered a few Arapahoe Indians on the 15th who had been hunting; they "stated that they had plenty of meat, and were now going to a good place to eat it—a fair specimen of the providence of the whole race," writes Raynolds.

The Arapahoes stated that a "war party" of Shoshones had left Wind River on a spring horse stealing junket among the white travelers on the Overland road. "Stealing horses means making war, in the Indian phraseology, the killing of men being considered as only an incidental occurrence," adds the captain. Keeping their heads into the West they crossed Poison Spring Creek, passed Rattlesnake Hills, and thence over the divide into Wind River drainage.

A vast area of alkaline land and numerous saline waters were encountered, though antelope were plentiful for meat. Grass was scarce and soon the Indian ponies

easily proved their superiority over the fine large horses brought out by the new escort that spring. The Big Horn mountains trimmed the northern horizon, and on the 19th an encampment was pitched on Wind River, where Maynadier arrived on the 23d.

"The river which last summer we descended (sic) under the name of the Big Horn, is formed by the junction of the Popo Agie and the Wind River at this point," Raynolds explains, "and should properly be called the Big Horn below the site of our present camp. By the trappers, however, it is always spoken of as the Wind River until it enters the canyon some thirty miles below here. . . .

"We are to separate again at this camp. My own division will ascend Wind River, and from its head cross to the Three Forks of the Missouri. Lieutenant Maynadier is to descend the Big Horn to the point at which we left it in September, and thence proceed westward along the base of the mountains, crossing the Yellowstone and reaching the Three Forks by Clark's route, the understanding being that we shall meet at the Three Forks on the last day of June.

"I deem it important that we should effect a junction by this date at the furthest for the following reasons: On the 18th of July will occur the total eclipse of the sun, which is attracting such attention in all scientific circles. My orders from the department require that, if possible, I should visit the line of total eclipse in British America, and make such observations as may be possible." . . .

Realizing his schedule required forced marching, Raynolds and party, guided by James Bridger, passed up Wind River on May 24. They entered the canyon on the 25th, and "upon our right are visible the dark peaks of the Big Horn range, relieved here and there by a snow-capped summit, but occasionally sinking to a very low altitude. One of these latter points Bridger calls 'Grey Bull Pass,' and asserts that through it there is an excellent road into the Big Horn valley." Elk and antelope continued plentiful.

Soon after leaving camp on May 26th "a bear was discovered on the opposite side of the stream, which Bridger's accuracy with the rifle promptly killed, and some of the men brought the carcass into camp. The guide had been previously complaining of illness, and was reluctant to leave camp in the morning, but the sight of game produced a sudden and remarkable convalescence. Our hunter was also fortunate enough to bring down an elk early in the morning, and thus our day's march was made with the pleasant prospect before us of fresh meat for dinner."

Lake Fork was crossed in about nine miles, the topographer and artist making a side trip to the mountain ponds which give the stream its name. A bold rocky spur near the Lake Fork mouth

thrust itself into the way of the pack train, which "was the first serious difficulty that the single pair of wheels we use for the odometer encountered." The bill of fare for supper May 26, included "elk, bear, venison, and brook trout."

"The large boulders on the hillside made the traveling so bad that I ultimately gave orders to leave our odometer wheels behind, and after a march of over eighteen miles our tents were again pitched for the night. As I was very anxious not to give up our odometer measurements, I sent back for the wheels after getting into camp, and they were brought in just before dark."

But it was not rough ground, which was to bar the party from their coveted visit to the Yellowstone wonderland, and thus to become the first scientific explorers of the place; it was deep snow, for heavy rains in the past few days, had fallen as snow in the mountains on top of the winter's supply. On the 29th, the stream, which had to be crossed often, was greatly swollen, and the ground very soft. "Our route bore up the south fork, which had to be crossed twice before reaching what Bridger called Otter Creek, where we camped after a march of only thirteen miles."

The magnificent scenery got into the diary on the 30th, just before the real trouble began in crossing the continental divide. Then the log of the journey was partially written in blood and tears. "It was my original desire to go from the head of Wind River to the head of the Yellowstone, keeping on the Atlantic slope, thence down the Yellowstone, passing the lake, and across by the Gallatin to the Three Forks of the Missouri," explains the disappointed captain.

"Bridger said at the outset that this would be impossible, and that it would be necessary to pass over to the headwaters of the Columbia, and back again to the Yellowstone. I had not previously believed that crossing the main crest twice would be more easily accomplished than the transit over what was in effect only a spur, but the view from our present camp settled the question adversely to my opinion at once. Directly across our route lies a basaltic ridge, rising not less than five thousand feet above us, its walls apparently vertical with no visible pass nor even a canyon.

"On the opposite side of this are the headwaters of the Yellowstone. Bridger remarked triumphantly and forcibly to me upon reaching this spot, 'I told you you could not go through. A bird can't fly over that without taking a supply of grub along.' I had no reply to offer, and mentally conceded the accuracy of the information of 'the old man of the mountains.'

"Throughout our entire ride (on a detour of reconnoitre) we saw an abundance of buffalo 'sign,' showing that they had been here recently, and tending to confirm a statement I have frequently heard that the Snake Indians keep the buffaloes penned up in the mountain valleys, and kill them as their necessities require. Our camping ground for the night (May 30) is evidently one much used, as

the remains of numerous lodges, and hundreds of lodge poles cover the ground, and it is evident that a camp at this point would effectually pen anything not winged that should chance to be in the valley above it.

"Game is certainly abundant in the valley and during our return ride we came upon an immense animal feeding amid the long grass at a distance of about two hundred and fifty or three hundred yards. We supposed it to be a buffalo, but upon its seeing us and rising we discovered that it was an enormous bear, whose equal for size I have never seen. As we were armed only with revolvers we did not molest it, nor did it seem in the least disconcerted by our presence. Antelopes are also numerous, and we saw many bands of forty or fifty. From the marshes close by immense flocks of ducks and geese were constantly arising.

"Thursday, May 31. We started at 7 o'clock, elated at the prospect of making our next halt upon the Pacific slope of the mountains. Bridger said that our camping ground for the night would be upon the waters of the Columbia, and within five miles of Green River, which could be easily reached. I therefore filled my canteen from Wind River, with the design of carrying the water to the other side, then procuring some from Green River, and with that of the Columbia making tea from the mingled waters of the Gulf of Mexico, the Gulf of California, and the Pacific—a fancy that the sequel will show was not gratified."

But the going was exceptionally bad, the slopes being excessively steep, and the fresh snow becoming deeper and more formidable. . . . "Bridger for the first time, lost heart and declared that it would be impossible to go further. To return involved retracing our steps fully half way to the Popo Agie, then turning north into the valley of the Big Horn, and perhaps following the route of Lieutenant Maynadier, to the Three Forks of the Missouri—a course plainly inadmissible until every other hope had failed. . . .

"At times the crust would sustain my weight, while at others it would break and let me sink, generally up to the middle, and sometimes in deep drifts up to my shoulders. In some instances I was able to extricate myself only by rolling and stamping, and in many places I was compelled to crawl upon my face over the treacherous surface of the drift. After great labor I found myself alone on the summit of the Rocky Mountains, with the train out of sight. . . .

"My attendant, who was leading my horse, stated that he should think they had advanced two or three miles since I left them, making the distance I had pushed forward alone some three or four miles. I found myself much exhausted, and my clothes saturated with snow water, but I succeeded in guiding the party through and at last reaching the summit of the crest. The descent upon the south

side was gradual, but very difficult, the snow being deep, while at the few points at which it was gone the ground was a perfect quagmire, and it was not until we had advanced some six miles from the summit that we found a scanty supply of grass upon which we could encamp in the midst of pines and snow.

"The day's march was by far the most laborious we had since leaving Fort Pierre; and wet and exhausted as I was, all the romance of my continental tea-party had departed, and though the valley of Green River was in plain sight I had not the energy to either visit or send to it. . . .

"To the left of our route and some ten miles from it, rises a bold conical peak, three thousand or four thousand feet above us. That peak I regarded as the topographical center of the continent, the waters from its sides flowing into the Gulf of Mexico, the Gulf of California, and the Pacific Ocean. I named it Union Peak, and the pass Union Pass.

"June 1. . . . We are now on waters flowing to the westward and into a branch of Lewis Fork, which Bridger says is known to the trappers as Gros Ventre Fork, the Gros Ventre Indians having been commonly in the habit of passing by this valley in their annual trips across the mountains. The ground was frozen when we started, just hard enough to bear our horses, and the poor beasts breaking through the crust into the mud, had as difficult traveling as could well be imagined.

"Winding our way down the hillsides over the rocks or through the mud some four miles we reached a bold clay bank seventy-five or one hundred feet high, the foot of which was washed by the stream. A narrow bridle path led over it, along which our pack animals passed in safety, but the odometer wheels could not be kept upright even with the aid of ropes, but rolled over, carrying the mules with them, bringing up at last at the water's edge, where we left them for the time." The campsite was well below the snow, however, and a party returned for the odometer.

"My guide seems more at a loss than I have ever seen him, and after reaching camp he rode in advance to reconnoitre, and returned saying, 'it would be necessary to make a short march tomorrow,' which I do not regret, as our animals are greatly broken down.

"June 2. . . . After a march of but three miles, Bridger advised a halt, as he did not know of another good camping ground within accessible distance. The grass is improving in quality, and I hope the rest on the Sabbath will be of essential benefit to our broken-down animals. Our object now is to keep as near to the dividing crest as possible, and recross as soon as we shall be able, to the headwaters of the Yellowstone.

"The animal life of this region differs essentially from that on the Atlantic slope. Even in Wind River valley many birds new to us were seen, and Doctor Hayden and his assistants have been very

busy collecting specimens of all kinds. Three or four squirrels previously unknown to us, double that number of birds, and a large and new species of rabbit have been obtained. Yesterday Bridger shot a mule deer, and the day before our hunter killed one on the eastern side of the crest of the mountains, a locality out of their usual geographical limit."

Deep mud and exhausted animals made marching almost impossible on Monday the 4th despite the Sunday rest; and the men were in an equal plight. "A spirit of insubordination and discontent was manifested among the men, showing itself openly in their apparent determination to abandon all further efforts to bring along the odometer wheels, which they permitted to turn over five times in about a half mile. It was with the greatest difficulty that I succeeded in enforcing discipline and inducing the men to continue the faithful discharge of their duties."

The mud became practically impassable on the 5th in the lower lands, yet snow blocked the rocky and harder slopes. In the bottom lands as the snow line was skirted, "I counted at one time twenty-five mules plunged deep in the mud, and totally unable to extricate themselves. To go on was clearly impossible, and as we were now above grass, to remain here was equally out of the question. The only course left therefore was to return, and we retraced our steps for about two miles, and pitched our tents at a point where our animals could pick up a scanty subsistence.

"After getting into camp Bridger ascended the summit of a high hill to obtain an idea of the country, and returned after dark with far from a favorable report. Nothing but snow was visible, and although he seems familiar with the locality, it is evident that he is in doubt as to what is best that we should next attempt. As I am exceedingly anxious to reach the upper valley of the Yellowstone, after a full discussion of the question in all its bearings with him tonight, it has been determined to make tomorrow a thorough examination of the mountains and pick out some path by which we may if possible find our way across them, and accomplish our purpose."

Bridger's stories of the natural phenomena of the headwaters of the Gallatin and Yellowstone rivers (the Yellowstone Park area of today) had obviously greatly impressed Captain Reynolds, who was seeking against great odds to become the first scientific explorer of the region. Bridger himself, no doubt shared the bitter cup of sorrow at being blocked by the snow, for as yet few persons had visited that section, which Bridger knew would startle even scientific men. We cannot refrain from entering in full the Captain's diary for his last two days spent trying to force his way through the snow.

"Wednesday, June 6. Leaving the party in camp I started with Bridger this morning, in accordance with our last night's arrangement, to ascertain if it was possible, by some means, to cross the mountain range before us. Following up the stream we soon reached

the limits of our yesterday's labors, and seeing a westerly fork which apparently headed in a low pass that looked promising we determined to explore it.

"Before reaching this fork we experienced great trouble in picking our way around snow drifts and through mud. After leaving the main stream the ground rose rapidly and the hillsides were covered with a dense growth of stunted pines, under which we found snow in abundance. Some of the banks were not so deep as to prevent our horses from plunging through them but others had to be trodden down before we could effect a passage. The labor was of course, excessive, but by perseverance the summit was at length reached.

"Bridger immediately declared that we were on the wrong route and that our morning's labor had been wholly useless. This was evident by the course of the ravine upon the other side of the ridge, which tended so far to the southward as to show that the drainage was still towards the Pacific, and that we had expended our efforts in climbing a spur. We therefore returned to the valley and ascended the main stream, which carried us farther to the eastward, and at first looked much less promising than the other.

"After forcing our way through the snow banks along the banks of the stream for about a mile, we reached a point where for three quarters of a mile above the valley was comparatively wide, being bordered by steep cliffs, cut in deep gorges, filled with snow. The neighboring hillsides were clad with snow and the level valley was covered to a uniform depth of from eighteen inches to two feet, without the slightest appearance of ever having been crossed by man or beast.

"Bridger at once seemed to recognize the locality, saying, 'This is the pass.' Our own exhaustion, however, as well as that of our horses, was too great for any further attempts today, and we therefore returned to camp determined to make another and final effort to reach the summit tomorrow.

"Thursday, June 7. I started this morning with a party of nine all told, to make the last attempt to find a solution of the difficult problem imposed upon us. My companions were the guide, Bridger; Doctor Hayden (naturalist), Mr. Hutton (topographer), Mr. Schonborn (artist), and four men. One of the mules, however, fell into the stream soon after starting and was nearly lost, and we were compelled to send it back with its rider.

"The rest of the party pushed on in our tracks of yesterday, without special trouble, till we reached the valley discovered at the close of our labors of the previous day. Here we encountered great obstacles. The deep snow in the numerous gorges rendered progress along the hillsides impossible, and compelled us to keep close to the stream in the valley, the descent into which was accomplished with much trouble. Our route here was crossed by side gullies from two

to four feet in depth, entirely invisible beneath the uniform surface of the snow, and into which we tumbled and out of which we floundered in a style at once ridiculous and exhausting. We partially remedied this at last by probing the depth of the snow ahead by rods, and by this simple expedient saved ourselves much labor and annoyance. We ultimately reached the upper end of the valley, and by a steep climb over the snow, scaled the last ascent and stood again upon the dividing crest of the Rocky Mountains.

"It did not require long to decide that further progress was impracticable. From the southward we had already passed over ten or fifteen miles of snow, but then we knew that there was a limit to it easily reached. To the north, or the direction in which our route from this point would lie, the view seemed almost boundless and nothing was in sight but pines and snow. To bring the party to where we stood was next to impracticable, but this I had determined to attempt, if there were any hopes of getting through the snow on the Yellowstone side of the mountains. My fondly cherished schemes of this nature were all dissipated, however, by the prospect before us, as a venture into that country would result in the certain loss of our animals, if not the whole party.

"I therefore very reluctantly decided to abandon the plan to which I had so steadily clung, and to seek for a route to the Three Forks of the Missouri by going farther to the west and passing down the valley of the Madison. After taking our fill of the disheartening view we returned to camp, to commence our execution of our new project on the morrow. The hunter today was sufficiently fortunate to kill two deer, which form a desirable addition to our rather empty larder."

Disappointment still rankled in Reynolds' heart when he came to prepare his final summary of the two years' work. He had been a full year with James Bridger, up to the time they turned back in deep snow, and had found his information so accurate that his description of the Yellowstone was implicitly believed. Thus we can only surmise the depth of regret suffered by both of these men, at having to turn back. Reynolds wrote regretfully, on his return to Washington, that "the valley of the upper Yellowstone is as yet a *terra incognita*. . . . Although it was June, the immense body of snow baffled all our exertions, and we were compelled to content ourselves with listening to marvelous tales of burning plains, immense lakes, and boiling springs, without being able to verify these wonders.

"I know of but two white men who claim to have ever visited this part of the Yellowstone valley—James Bridger and Robert Meldrum. The narratives of both these men are very remarkable, and Bridger, in one of his recitals, described an immense boiling spring that is a perfect counterpart of the geysers of Iceland. As he is uneducated, and had probably never heard of the existence of such

natural marvels elsewhere, I have little doubt that he spoke of that which he had actually seen. The burning plains described by these men may be volcanic, or more probably burning beds of lignite similar to those on Powder River, which are known to be in a state of ignition.

"Bridger also insisted that immediately west (sic) of the point at which we made our final effort to penetrate this singular valley, there is a stream of considerable size which divides, and flows down either side of the watershed, thus discharging its waters into both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Having seen this phenomenon on a small scale in the highlands of Maine, where a rivulet discharges a portion of its waters into the Atlantic and the remainder into the St. Lawrence, I am prepared to concede that Bridger's 'Two-Ocean-River' *may* be a verity.

"Had our attempt to enter this district been made a month later in the season the snow would have mainly disappeared and there would have been no insurmountable obstacles to overcome. I cannot doubt, therefore, that at no very distant day the mysteries of this region will be fully revealed, and though small in extent, I regard the valley of the upper Yellowstone as the most interesting unexplored district in our widely expanded country."

The extensive map accompanying the Raynolds report is an open fabric of isolated features in approximate positions, held together by bands of many details along the immediate routes traversed. Much of the interpolated data, and most of the nomenclature on the routes were obviously contributed by the guide, James Bridger. This is the first known map of the Yellowstone Park area.

The Yellowstone "terra incognita" of the journal is banded on the map with Lieutenant Maynadier's route on the east and Captain Raynolds' route on the west, diverging at the mouth of Wind River, and converging at the Three Forks of the Missouri. Bridger's "Pass Creek or Two Ocean River" is correctly mapped just east of Jackson's Lake, which Raynolds did not see, and just south of Yellowstone Lake.

The latter lake is placed approximately in correct shape and position with reference to Stinking (Shoshone) River, Clark's Fork, the Yellowstone River, "Falls of the Yellowstone," the Gallatin and Madison Rivers, Henry's Lake, and "Burnt Hole" (the Geyser Basins). Sulphur Mountain, Elephant's Back Mountain, Mount Madison, and Mount Gallatin are shown on the map about as accurately as might be expected inasmuch as Bridger's statements were transferred from Raynolds' abbreviated notes and memory, by the cartographers, onto a map which Bridger probably neither saw nor edited.



SHOSHONE INDIAN VILLAGE, near Fort Bridger, under Chief Washakie, close friend of James Bridger. Bridger's last wife was of the Shoshone or Snake tribe.
(Am. Bur. Ethnology.)

CHAPTER XLIX

RAYNOLDS LEAVES THE MOUNTAINS

DENIED admission to the Yellowstone, James Bridger oriented his heart to the westward, and tentatively selected another love, namely, the Jackson's Hole and Pierre's Hole country, as a route for the journey around the snowbound geyserland; and thither he led the Raynolds party. Disappointment at first seemed to entangle the old scout's legs, for he got started wrong from the snow-girt encampment on the Gros Ventre.

"The crossing of the spur was, of course, useless, as it turned out," commented Raynolds on June 8; "and resulted from a mistake of Bridger's." But the captain did not find it in his heart to censure his faithful guide. "These little errors in matters of detail upon his part are not remarkable," Raynolds explains, "as it is fifteen years since he last visited this region, and they fade into insignificance compared with his accurate general knowledge of the country."

The more advanced springtime in the lowlands was a joy to the snow-buffed travelers; but still there was toil for the overworked animals. On the 9th "we reached the (Gros Ventre) river bank again at the foot of a high red bluff, over whose summit we had seen the peaks of the Teton in the morning. We passed around it along a narrow foot-path close to the water's edge and at the bottom of a lofty precipice. Here another accident occurred. Three of the pack mules escaped from their drivers and pushed up so high among the rocks that the men refused to follow them. Two returned in safety, of their own accord, but the third lost its footing and fell down a vertical descent of over fifty feet, rolling into the river and swimming to the opposite shore.

"Part of the pack came off at the foot of the precipice and was picked up, but the remainder was carried across, containing two bundles of bedding. I immediately ordered the party to encamp, and one of the men succeeded in crossing the stream despite the rapid current. He found the mule dead, but the pack unharmed save by water. The rapidity of the current rendered some expedient necessary to bring the latter across, and a stone was thrown over with a twine attached, by which a rope was drawn to that bank,

and made fast to the pack. The latter was then turned adrift and swung around to our side of the stream. The man swam the current without apparent difficulty on his return."

Jackson's Hole was entered on June 11th, its flower-painted meadows being in glorious contrast with the cruel ivory snowfields aloft. But there was no time to sojourn and contemplate, for the Snake River was a torrent and the party moved rapidly down the river in quest of a ford, "Bridger declaring that we could find none above." The stream was there divided into several channels, but the depth and velocity of the angry waters forbade a crossing. A man was drowned on the 12th while inspecting a ford; and after examining fully twenty-five miles of the stream without success, it was decided to try transporting the men and chattels on a raft.

On the 13th "We launched the raft and attempted to guide it by a rope to the shore, the current being too rapid to turn it adrift, but it even then behaved so badly that it was promptly pronounced a complete failure.

"Before this, however, I had resolved to try Bridger's ingenuity and had ordered him, with such men as could be spared, to construct a boat. After the raft fiasco I found that he had made good progress, and I immediately put all hands at work on this undertaking. The frame work was of course easily constructed, but our great difficulty was to devise a covering, there being no skins in our possession, and our gutta percha blankets which were purchased in New York, being almost worthless. We were compelled to make use of them, however, protecting them by a lodge-skin of Bridger's, and to render them more completely impervious to water I had large quantities of rosin gathered from the pine in the vicinity, and thickly coated them with this substance. By night a very respectable boat was completed, rude in appearance, but promising to be serviceable. Its length was twelve and one-half and its beam three and one-half feet, and it was remarkable for the fact that it was constructed entirely without nails or spikes, the framework being bound together with leather thongs and the covering fastened on by this common device of the traders of this section."

The skin boat was a success, though there were three raging channels, each a hundred yards in width, and separated by a half mile of land to be portaged; and three hard days were required to effect the crossing. The animals were enticed into the racing torrent with much persuasion, swimming the channels in safety. The troublesome odometer wheels were left on shore, lest they should become an unruly cargo in midstream; but again the Captain repented and sent back for them. This time, however, "Mr. Alexander, my foreman, attempted to bring the odometer wheels over on a raft, but failed, and was compelled to abandon them in the middle

of the stream." Thus they apparently could trouble the travelers no more.²⁵

"We were visited by Indians today, among whom was Cut-Nose, who Bridger declares to be the hereditary chief of the Snakes. I made him a small present, and from the others the men purchased some capital trout." The evening's encampment was on the west bank of Snake River, "about ten miles southeast of the highest of the Tetons, the most noted landmarks in this region." Crossing the Teton range on the 18th about seven miles from the river and about one thousand nine hundred feet higher, the party ascended to the edge of Pierre's Hole, ten miles beyond the crest. Raynolds noted a pine tree on the summit bearing the inscription "J. M. July 7, 1832. July 11, 1833."

"Tuesday, June 19. Our course today has borne nearly due north, passing down through Pierre's Hole, which almost deserves the extravagant praise bestowed upon it by Bridger, who declares it to be the finest valley in the world. It is between twenty and twenty-four miles in length, and seven or eight in width; its gently undulating surface being covered with vegetation of the greatest luxuriance, and carpeted with innumerable flowers of brilliant hues, and the richest varieties. It is bounded upon all sides by snow-capped peaks, while through its center flows a fine stream fed by many branches finding their sources in the neighboring mountains. The latter, whose banks are uniformly muddy, have retarded our progress somewhat, but we have advanced very rapidly, and encamped at 10 o'clock after a march of between seventeen and eighteen miles. The Tetons have shown off finely upon our right today, and in front to the left of our course a lofty, snow-clad peak is visible, which Bridger declares to be at the head of the middle fork of Jefferson."

Leaving Pierre's Hole on the 20th, "Bridger and myself pushed our way carefully in advance, among the obstructions, passed over

25. This crossing of the Snake bears some resemblance to the following from Shotwell's reminiscent article (40): "Another laughable incident was related to me by Bridger himself. Soon after he was employed as official guide by the government, he was sent with an exploring party into the Big Horn mountains. There was quite a party of wagons, pack animals and a squad of cavalry, all under the command of a young officer fresh from West Point. All went well until the expedition reached the Big Horn River, swollen at the time from melting snows. When Bridger suggested the plan for crossing the turbulent stream, he was curtly told that he was only employed as a guide. With this, the fresh young West Pointer ordered two of the mounted men to ride in and fasten a line to the opposite shore. The horses lost their footing in the swift current and one of the men was drowned. Then, in humiliation, the West Point youth appealed to Bridger, and implored him to take the crossing in hand. This Bridger agreed to do, but admonished the youngster to retire to his tent and remain there until called for.

"To describe in detail the provisions made for crossing the stream, while interesting, would prove a long story. First, a crude boat was constructed

the ridge, and thence down by a deep descent into the valley of a large stream, which Bridger declared to be Henry's Fork, confessing that he had entirely mistaken his locality, and that he was greatly surprised at finding this formidable river here."

"As it constituted an insuperable barrier to our immediate progress I ordered the train to return to the camping grounds passed early in the afternoon and halt there for the night. With the guide I commenced a thorough examination of the stream; we found it apparently too deep to ford, flowing between high banks and with a swift current. We went down its valley and attempted to find fords at a number of points, but unsuccessfully. I at last left Bridger to continue explorations, and crossed over the hills to camp and ordered the men to immediately commence the construction of another boat.

"By night its framework was finished and ready to be carried to the river bank early in the morning. Bridger returned and reported having found an excellent place for crossing the stream by boat with a good camping ground upon both banks. The pack-master and one of the men whom I had sent up the stream in search of a ford came back after an unsuccessful trip."

Thursday, June 21. "We commenced putting the boat together and had half completed the work when one of my men whom I had sent below returned with the announcement that he had found a ford that was practicable for our larger animals. We immediately availed ourselves of this discovery, and by making two trips with our more powerful beasts carried everything across and encamped upon the opposite bank, the day being far advanced and Bridger desiring to reconnoiter the country ahead."

Leaving Henry's Fork on the 22d the train moved northeasterly into the timber-clogged hills, where standing and down timber greatly hindered progress. "Early in the day we passed a large stream which Bridger declared to be Spring Fork. Some distance

of poles and willows. This was covered with some heavy canvas, and made waterproof by a liberal application of pitch, prepared from gum gathered from the spruce and pine trees. The men then stripped, and on horseback, succeeded in crossing with a line, and with this, dragged the cable ashore, which was made fast to a large tree. All hands then stretched the cable and made it fast on the side where the party awaited with the boat secured to the cable by a slip noose and all were safely carried across the river, the young officer being last of all.

"And here comes the laughable party of the story: The first thing the youngster did on being restored to his command was to call on the chaplain to assemble the expedition and return thanks to Providence for the safe crossing. Here Bridger's eyes sparkled as he told how that chaplain had fallen on his knees, and in a loud voice thanked the Lord God of Hosts for bringing the troops over in safety. 'And darn his sanctimonious skin,' old Jim concluded to me in recounting the story, 'he never mentioned Bridger once, and I felt as if I had had something to do with that plan myself.'"

farther on we reached a second, about forty yards in width, which he hesitatingly pronounced to be Lake Fork, and up the valley of the latter we determined to go, preferring this course to further continuing among the timber."

"After about three miles advance however, we came to the 'spring,' showing that Bridger had been mistaken, and that this was Spring Fork. The spring is the largest I have ever heard of, and furnishes two-thirds of the volume of water in the stream, bursting forth the hillside and reaching the main channel by a beautiful waterfall over thirty feet in height. This feature of the country is not easily to be forgotten. . . .

"This afternoon our hunter killed a large bear, giving us our first taste of fresh meat for nearly a week. The camas plant also abounds in this vicinity, and it has today been gathered and cooked, adding the vegetable element to our bill of fare. The camas is a bulbous plant that bears a beautiful blue flower. Its bulbs, which alone are edible, are from a half to a single inch in diameter, resemble onions save in their peculiar flavor, and apparently contain a large proportion of glutinous matter." . . .

"Game has been abundant today (23d), and we have seen two large herds of elk. The hunter has also killed two deer and an antelope. Bridger says that we are now through the timber, and that there is nothing to further delay our progress to the Three Forks." On Monday, June 2, the route lay northeasterly by way of Lake Fork and Henry's Lake, and thence over the great divide. "As we approached its summit I put spurs to my horse and galloped ahead over the boundary line and into Nebraska!" (Montana).

"The pass is only four miles from, and two hundred feet above the lake and so level that it is difficult to locate the exact point at which the waters divide. It is about a mile in width, with the sides sloping gently to the center. . . . The approaches upon either side are remarkable, being of about a uniform ascent of fifty feet to the mile, and thus affording unequalled facilities for either wagon or railroad purposes. I named it Low Pass (now Reynolds' Pass) and deem it to be one of the most remarkable and important features of the topography of the Rocky Mountains." The encampment that evening was on the Madison River.

"After crossing Lake Fork, Mr. Hutton, Doctor Hayden, and two attendants turned to the east and visited the pass over the mountains, leading into Burnt Hole valley (the Geyser Basins). They found the summit distant only about five miles from our route, and report the pass in all respects equal to that through which the train had gone. From it they could see a second pass upon the other side of the valley, which Bridger states leads to the Gallatin. He also says that between that point and the Yellowstone there are no mountains to be crossed; and if this is true, these passes unquestionably offer the best route for a continental railroad. From

them to the westward there is an easy road over the Camas Prairie and thence down to Lewis Fork (Snake River). (This is approximately the present route of the Oregon Short Line into Yellowstone Park.)

Following down the Madison River the valley of the Three Forks was reached on June 29. "The valley at this point is wide and inclined to marshiness. The Madison flows in a winding channel badly cut up by islands and sloughs, and as the barometer indicates a fall of one thousand feet since we left it last night it must be a continuous rapid through the canyon, or a succession of cascades. Bridger, however, denies the existence of any perpendicular fall, and I am inclined to regret not having explored it throughout its entire length, if it had been possible."

Sunday, July 1. . . . "One of the men this morning swam the Jefferson and reported that we were encamped upon simply one channel of the river, a large island intervening and two others equally formidable will have also to be crossed before we shall reach the opposite bank. This fact, together with the non-arrival of Lieutenant Maynadier, has decided me to cross the Madison and Gallatin instead of the Jefferson, and go down to Fort Benton by the east bank of the Missouri."

On July 2 and 3 the party crossed the Gallatin and Madison rivers in one of Bridger's indispensable skin boats, the animals swimming the streams. Late on the 3d Lieutenant Maynadier and party were encountered; and at a conference on the 4th the eclipse expedition was abandoned, Raynolds planning to proceed to Fort Benton, and thence down the Missouri, and directing Lieutenant Maynadier to journey eastward and down the Yellowstone River, the parties to meet at Fort Union. Bridger was to accompany Raynolds.

Leaving camp on July 5, "after a march of fifteen miles we reached the summit of the divide between the Little Green (which Bridger describes as emptying into the Missouri about thirty miles below the Three Forks) and the Gallatin." Traveling northeastward, the valley of Smith's River was reached on the 7th, in which the journey was made to the Great Falls of the Missouri.

"July 9. . . . Throughout the day we followed the Indian trail that we found yesterday, and supposed it would lead us directly to Fort Benton. Bridger reconnoitered ahead this afternoon for some miles, however, and reports that it shortly strikes off toward the Musselshell or returns up Smith's River."

The Great Falls of the Missouri were visited on July 12. Describing the falls briefly, and then giving Lewis and Clark's detailed description in full, which Raynolds says was still very accurate in the main, he adds: "A remarkable fact is that the eagle's nest, described in 1805, as above quoted, still remains in the cottonwood on the island, in the stream, and as we came within

sight, a bald eagle of unusual size was perched in the tree by its side. This affords a very striking illustration of the habits of this peculiarly American bird, and from its known longevity it may have been the identical eagle that Captain Lewis made historical more than half a century ago. The description of the Great Fall is very correct, save that in the lapse of time the vertical descent is not now more than one-fifth of the entire width."

The caravan drew up at Fort Benton on Saturday, July 14, 1860. This establishment "was not visible until we ascended the summit of the bluff opposite, when it burst upon us as the central point of an inspiring picture. It is located in a beautiful valley amid an amphitheater of lofty hills. Substantial trading houses, the shining tents of troops, and several hundred Indian lodges filled the small plain before us, the signs of life and business contrasting forcibly with the vast solitude through which we had for weeks been journeying. After enjoying the beauty of the prospect we descended from the bluff and encamped opposite the fort after a march of sixteen miles."

Captain Raynolds' orders to Lieut. John Mullins, dated July 18, 1860, directed him to make a topographical examination of the country south of the Missouri River, between Fort Benton and Fort Union; and to secure the good will of the Indians encountered. "The following persons are assigned to your command," Raynolds wrote, "to aid you in the discharge of duties, in the capacities named: James Bridger, guide; Dr. F. V. Hayden, naturalist; A. Schonborn, artist and meteorologist; W. D. Stuart, topographer." Mullins departed with his detachment, which included horse wranglers, and the entire military escort, on July 20.

The odometer bobs up again on the wheels of a cart of mysterious origin, since its original gears were supposed to have gone down Snake River on a raft. Mullins writes on July 21, that he "traveled about three miles and was then forced to abandon the cart, as the country was too rough, and I had no suitable harness. As this step rendered the odometer useless, I was forced to determine my distance by time and rate of travel. The barometer was also accidentally broken, but Mr. Schonborn was enabled to ascertain the relative elevation and depression by means of the boiling point of water."

Keeping to the highlands, along an Indian trail, "a march of five miles up this course brought me to a deep dry creek bed, with precipitous banks; following down the bed of this creek for one and one-half miles we came suddenly upon a bold, swift stream, which the guide (Bridger) informed me was called Judith River. . . . By the aid of my field glass I could see distinctly what is called Devil's Gate on the Missouri River, as well as an indistinct view of the valley near the position of the Great Falls," identification of course being through Bridger's eyes.

Proceeding up the left fork of Judith River on the 24th, "I observed a large band of Indians approaching us down the valley of the stream we were ascending; I sent an advance party with my guide (Bridger) to ascertain who they were. They proved to be the Little Robes, a band of Blackfeet Indians. They were delighted to meet me, and I accompanied them to their village, half a mile distant where, to my surprise I saw waving from the top of the chief's tent the 'Star Spangled Banner.'

"I counted fifty-four lodges, and estimated the number of Indians to be about one hundred and fifty or two hundred. They insisted upon my stopping with them, saying that they wished to eat, smoke and talk with their white brethren. I concluded it was best to stop and after selecting a good position for defense in case of treachery, I ordered out a stronger guard than usual and had the animals hopped within gunshot of camp, and the packs, parfleches, saddles, and so forth, piled up in such a manner as to form a defensive work to be used if necessary.

"The chief invited me to his tent and set out something to eat of which I partook, although it was not very palatable in its nature, still I did not want to offend the feelings of our red brother. I was enabled to talk with them through my guide and interpreter, James Bridger, who spoke the Flathead language, and was readily understood as there were several members of the band who were Flatheads and could interpret to the rest.

"I distributed a portion of the Indian goods that had been placed in my hands with which they were highly delighted. The chief, a cross-eyed Indian, said that his heart was full of joy and that he loved his white brethren. He then harangued the people, and they gathered together a large quantity of buffalo meat and carried it down to my tent; we found it, just then, to be a very valuable and acceptable addition to our stock of provisions."

Crossing Judith Pass on July 25, the evening encampment was pitched on a branch of Musselshell. Indian lodge pole trails made easy going on the 26th; and the hunter found plenty of game. On the evening of the 27th, "I arrived at Yellowwater Creek, and determined to camp here as my guide informed me that it was twenty-five or thirty miles to the Musselshell River, with no water intermediate." Grass and timber were scarce even at Yellowwater.

A barren country was traversed on the 28th, an early encampment being made on the Musselshell River. "From this point as far as the eye could reach, the country seemed covered with immense herds of buffalo, all moving toward the valley of the Yellowstone. I selected a good camp for the night and then sent out my hunters who killed several fat cows. We then had a feast on humpribs, marrowbones, tenderloin, etc., and all the party, beneath the genial influence of the feast, seemed to recover their pristine spirits. The grass being tolerably good I determined to lie here tomorrow for

the purpose of recruiting the animals, and preparing for another march through the 'bad lands,' by which we are completely environed, and which present anything but a welcome appearance."

Moving still easterly on the 30th, and northeasterly on the 31st, buffalo in large numbers were still seen, but the forage was scanty and the travel quite difficult. At this encampment "the three forks of the Porcupine were seen almost to their source, winding through the white hills and cedar reefs, all coming in together near the same point forming the main Porcupine."

Out of the Porcupine drainage the route lay over the Yellowstone-Missouri divide on August 1, the night encampment being laid on Big Dry Sandy River. Forage was unusually scarce and the animals were becoming much emaciated, two of them being left. During a storm at that place "some of the animals were very much injured by the pelting of large hailstones."

The camp of the 2d was on the Dry Sandy, and on a small, well timbered tributary on the 3d. "Just before reaching the timber I discovered by aid of my glass, a large body of Indians approaching us rapidly; I selected a camp in the timber under cover of the cottonwood trees and dead timber. Very soon about twelve Indians galloped up to the crest of the hill above my camp, and halted as if to reconnoiter my position."

"I sent out the guide to ascertain what they wanted, and in the meantime had all my animals hobbled and tied up close to camp. Bridger soon returned bringing the Indians into camp, saying that they were Crows and friendly. I observed that they were all dressed in war costume; their bows strung and arrows and rifles in their hands, and seemed to have an unfriendly scowl upon their faces.

"Having with me only fourteen available men I stationed half of them as a guard over the animals under charge of a sergeant, and the other half placed over the property in camp. In a few minutes three of the Indians fired their rifles in the air, and on my asking what it meant, they informed me that 'their hearts were bad,' and they had come to avenge themselves upon the white men. Their answer was hardly given before my camp was charged upon by about 250 Crow warriors, yelling at the tops of their voices and firing about thirty shots into my camp, but fortunately doing no damage except shooting a few holes through one tent and riding over another.

"I cautioned my men not to fire on the Indians unless some one of my party was hit. The object of the Indians in charging in this manner was to stampede my animals and by that means get possession of them, but as I had taken the precaution to have the animals hobbled and tied up the Indians failed to accomplish their object.

"It was with great difficulty I succeeded in getting the Indians

sufficiently quiet to hear what I had to say to them. By the aid of Bridger, who understood their language, I was enabled to talk to their chief, Great Bear, or Mato-Luta. I will submit verbatim as translated his conversation on this occasion. He said: 'Our hearts are bad. The white man is no longer a friend of the Crow Indian. The Great Father has deceived us. We have not received our annuities. My people are sick and dying from eating bread given to us when the Great Father sent three steamers up the Missouri River.

" 'We made a treaty with the Great Father many moons ago, in which the Great Father at Washington told us that we must not leave our own country, and that our annuities would be delivered to us every year in our own country. They have not been sent to us this year, but the Great Father has sent them to our enemies' country [such is the fact; their goods were sent to Major Twiss, in Ogallalla, Sioux country, by some misrepresentation on the part of persons interested against the American Fur Company—J. M.] where we cannot get them; for our enemies are stronger than we. The white man has sent our enemies upon us; some of our warriors have been killed and we have lost many horses.

" 'They have taken our trading post (Fort Sarpy on the Yellowstone River) away from us. We could go there and trade with the whites without being killed by our enemies, the Sioux; but now we have no presents; we cannot trade our robes for blankets anywhere. The Sioux will not let us trade at Fort Union; and now, our hearts being black, we have come out to fight *you*.' . . .

"Having succeeded in pacifying the Indians sufficiently to prevent a fight, the chief desired me not to go near their camp, as the hearts of his young men were still black, and he knew that he could not control them. Seeing the justice of his advice, I followed it."

Better soil and water, and more grass and wood, were welcome on the 5th and 6th, but the bad lands were entered again on the 7th, necessitating the use of 'bois de vache' for fuel. "Just after we camped we discovered a body of Indians (about fifteen or twenty) approaching us. They proved to be one of the lower bands of Crow Indians, and were very friendly in their manner. I gave them the remainder of the Indian goods in my possession, with which they were well pleased, and they sent me in return some very fine dried tongues."

A northeasterly course on the 9th across the bad lands brought the party into a camp on the Yellowstone River. Buffalo were plentiful and a supply of meat was secured. Moving down the Yellowstone on the 10th, the party reached a point on the Missouri River opposite Fort Union on the 11th, being ferried over to the Fort that afternoon. Mullins closes his report as follows:

"I cannot conclude, sir, without expressing my appreciation of the services of the gentlemen assigned to my command as civil assistants; of Bridger, the guide, it is unnecessary to say anything, as his reputation is not confined to our own country. The geological report of Doctor Hayden will be the best commentary upon the value of his services and the manner in which his services were performed, although the duty was with him a labor of love.

"Mr. Schonborn was indefatigable in his endeavors to procure a correct barometrical profile of the country; and after the barometer was broken he did all in his power to compensate for the deficit in our instrumental outfit. His lifelike views of the country speak for themselves. To Mr. Stuart my thanks are also due for the manner in which he discharged the onerous duties of topographer. I consider it my duty and it is a pleasant task, to pay this token of respect to the gentlemen composing my staff."

After a pleasant week of interesting reminiscences with the frontiersmen at Fort Union, in which Bridger was a conspicuous participant, the Raynolds party departed on the 15th of August. Lieutenant Maynadier, and party, took charge of the baggage which was loaded into two fine river boats which he named "the Jim Bridger and the Bob Meldrum, respectively, after the noted pioneers of this region." Captain Raynolds, accompanied by James Bridger himself, and the major part of the exploring party, departed by land down the north side of the river. He tried in vain to secure a local guide through the Sioux country, but all who might have served, were afraid to do so because of the threatening attitude of the Indians of late.

At Fort Berthold on the 22d guides were still unavailable because a band of Sioux at the post were behaving insolently. "This tribe of Indians is at present in great need of sound castigation" declared the exasperated captain. Defiantly crossing the river to the south or west bank, Raynolds boldly set forth through the Sioux preserves with no other guide than James Bridger, whose training and instincts were expected to compensate for his lack of local acquaintance.

"All the whites in this region are greatly alarmed at the hostile tone of the Sioux, and they have predicted that we will be attacked." But Raynolds was spoiling for a fight, and was disappointed finally at being left severely alone. "The chief embarrassment attending the lack of a guide," he wrote, "is found in the fact that we shall not possess any reliable information as to localities in which water can be found."

Rapid and uneventful marches were made, encamping in turn at Knife River, Fort Clark (and the Ree or Aricara village), Heart River, and the Cannonball, with surveys of the country from every butte encountered. Grand River formed the encampment August 31, Moreau River September 4, Cheyenne River the next day, and

the Missouri River on the 6th. "We reached Fort Pierre at noon (September 7) having traveled over two thousand five hundred miles since leaving it in May of last year."

On September 8 "we at once commenced arrangements for continuing our homeward journey. Our poorest horses I ordered sold, and steps were also taken to have the others properly shod. I had the pleasure of meeting here my Sioux guide, who piloted us through the Cheyenne country last year, and deserted us near Powder River, taking with him a valuable mule. He greeted me very cordially and appeared to regard his knavery as highly amusing. The stolen mule, however, was nowhere visible, and retaliating measures were of course out of the question. It is also worth mentioning that this Indian described to me the entire route of the expedition as far as the Yellowstone, proving that we have been carefully watched."

Leaving Fort Pierre September 10, White River was crossed on the 13th, Water Holes Creek on the 14th, and Fort Randall was reached on the 18th. "As we approached the Fort, and while it was yet two or three miles distant and not in sight, we met a couple of soldiers who saluted us with the question, 'Whose party is this?' On my replying 'Captain Reynolds' I noticed a look of surprise, which was explained when I met Colonel Monroe, the commanding officer, who expressed great satisfaction at my arrival, as they had had a report for some days that my whole party had been cut off by the Indians."

"It seems that a small command from Fort Randall had been over to Fort Laramie and had there learned that some professedly friendly Sioux had reported that my whole party had been cut off north of the Black Hills, and at last accounts only two or three were alive, who were running for dear life. This rumor had been carried from Fort Randall to Sioux City and there got into the papers causing no little uneasiness to my friends. Colonel Monroe said the story came so well authenticated that he was expecting orders to look me up. . . .

"It was the opinion of all the traders that we would be attacked and they attributed our safety to our not having shown any disposition to yield the right, under the Harney treaty, to go where we desired."

The march down the Missouri was resumed September 21, crossing the Ponka River on the 22d. "During the latter part of our march we passed an embankment of earth about three feet in height, forming a circular enclosure nearly two hundred and fifty feet in diameter. Within were scattered about the remains of Indian lodges, indicating that this was the site of an abandoned Ponka village. The tribe still continue, it is said, to construct their villages in this manner."

"Near our camp upon the hillside are several mounds freshly

thrown up and constituting a Ponka cemetery. The *modus operandi* of erecting these mounds is as follows: Two perpendicular stakes are planted in the ground and connected by a horizontal bar resting on their tops. Slanting poles are then laid on each side resting upon the ridge, and forming a species of wooden tent, within which the dead bodies are laid, when the whole is covered with earth forming a high circular mound. The fact that these practices still continue among the Indians of this age may possess some bearing upon the efforts being made to calculate the supposed great antiquity of the Indian mounds of Ohio and the West and South."

At Niobrara on the 24th a guide and interpreter was obtained, as well as some potatoes and other much coveted supplies. The Elkhorn River was crossed on the 28th and Plum Creek on the 29th. "After encamping two houses were seen upon our right, distant over two miles. I visited them and found the people to be of a better class than the ordinary frontier farmers. They seem to be doing well with the ground they cultivate and were troubled with no scarcity of food. The great lack are educational and religious facilities. I obtained from them some potatoes, poultry and butter, which have been decided luxuries in our supper." On October 2, "we advanced to a spring in the vicinity of Fontenelle, which contains about fifty houses and here encamped."

"Wednesday, October 3. Our march today ended on the Platte road where we soon found indisputable proof of our having again reached the influence of civilization in the fact that the party speedily procured liquor, which produced a general disturbance in camp. The soldiers and citizen employees became engaged in so heated and senseless a dispute that it became necessary to separate their camps, and I thought at one time that the drunken quarrel might end in fatal consequences. Prompt and vigorous measures were taken and alone quelled the disturbances, and I heartily rejoiced that throughout our long journey we had been beyond the reach of this terrible curse, which has occasioned the only difficulties which have disgraced the expedition.

"Thursday, October 4. We this morning effected an early start and after a brisk march closed our arduous labors by entering Omaha, where I found Lieutenant Maynadier waiting, and consolidated the expedition for final disbandment. Our friends received us cordially, and those at a distance were promptly notified of our arrival by telegraph; and by mails and dispatches awaiting us we were soon in possession of intelligence of our homes and families, the want of which had constituted one of the chief deprivations we had been compelled to undergo.

"As soon as possible the expedition was disbanded, all its affairs settled, and its members dispersed to the various duties and avocations that succeeded their life on the plains and among the mountains of the Great West."

CHAPTER L

THE EVOLUTION OF BRIDGER'S STORIES

JAMES Bridger, probably better than any other man, typified the western frontiersman, and faithfully personified the spirit of the old West. He emitted the redolent atmosphere of the trapper like the north pole glows with the aurora. Therefore his fame as an interesting frontiersman crept out of the official army exploration reports like a grass fire might escape from a fenced pastureland.

The flame of interest that was kindled in the stories of bygone trapper days at Raynolds' winter quarters on Deer Creek was slowly fanned into a national conflagration of entertainment. Unfortunately, however, Bridger's truthful narratives of experience, and his faithful descriptions of the natural phenomena of the Yellowstone Park and other regions, were to be twisted almost beyond recognition in the withering heat of ridicule and disbelief. This came about largely through second hand narrators, who still attributed the re-told story to Bridger.

Soon after arriving at the Westport farm in the late fall of 1860, Bridger was sought out by Ned Buntline, a prominent story writer of the day, and "Bridger gave him enough adventures to keep him writing the balance of his life," according to General Dodge (1). "Bridger took a liking to Buntline," Dodge continues, "and took him across the plains with him on a scouting trip. After a while Buntline returned to the East, and not long afterward the Jim Bridger stories commenced to be published. One of these was printed every week, and Bridger's companions used to save them up and read them to him. Buntline made Bridger famous, and carried him through more hairbreadth escapes than any man ever had."²⁶

26. Ned Buntline, pen name for Colonel Edward Z. C. Judson (b. Philadelphia, 1822, d. 1886), who was chief of scouts among the Indians during the civil war, with rank of colonel, receiving twenty wounds in service. His first literary work, a story of adventure, appeared in *Knickerbocker*

Thus through the alchemy of the journalist the flame of Bridger's stories was transformed into chunks of pure gold for Buntline, and Bridger himself soon found that he was not so much of a frontiersman as a story teller, the author of "Old Jim Bridger's Lies," to the unfortunate discredit of the truthful old scout. Bridger's stories were greedily seized upon by story tellers everywhere, and tagged with Bridger's name, after countless metamorphoses.

Elbert Hubbard once used the word "kabojolism" as an antonym for plagiarism; that is, crediting sayings or writings to persons who did not make them. The kabojolist was, for instance, one who wanted to say something risky, and attribute it to another for his own safety. Thus were most of James Bridger's supposed stories, pure kabojolisms.

His glass mountain of the Yellowstone Park area (Obsidian Cliff), which became a celebrated neutral ground for Indians seeking choice arrowheads, and which is no less wonderful today than when Bridger first told the world about it, was made the vehicle or excuse for all the grotesque brood of "Glass Mountain" tales that a host of willing story tellers could think of. All were, of course, attributed to Bridger.

His two-ocean river, which is today a wonder of geography, and ever will remain, became the forked

Magazine in 1838, when he was only sixteen years of age. He became editor of a weekly story paper called "Ned Buntline's Own" in 1848, and was arrested for inciting the Astor Place riots through this paper. He was fined \$250 and spent a year in prison, from September, 1849.

After his release, he devoted himself to writing sensational stories for certain weekly newspapers under the name of Ned Buntline, his income from this source reaching \$20,000 a year. He filled in his spare time lecturing on temperance. Some of his writings were said to have been barred from school books as cheap literature. According to his biographer (86), he wrote "Buffalo Bill," "Wrestling Joe," "The Red Right Hand," "The Comanche's Dream," "Life on the Prairie," "Mountain Tom," "Rattlesnake Ned," "Big Foot Wallace," "Wild Bill's Last Trail," and about sixty other book or novel titles. The following is from the biographer's preface. He does not specifically mention James Bridger in the biography:

"The life history of Colonel Edward Zane Carroll Judson ("Ned Buntline") is more thrilling than romance * * * as a midshipman in the navy, a soldier in the Seminole war, the Mexican war, the four years of warfare between the North and South, and finally in the Indian wars of the wild west.

tongue of the serpent, as a disbelieving and cynical public peddled the tale with its many absurd variations. His river that was hot at the bottom made such a good story that even after the discovery of the hot springs in the bed of the Fire Hole River, certain spirits persisted in keeping the circumstances separated, evidently to maintain the charm of the friction-heated river story, after it had been legally executed.

Bridger's original story of the use of the hot springs of the geyser basins as fireless cookers is an experience that may be repeated by the traveler today with as much adventure and success as of old; and the cooking of the fish as drawn from the water, where the hot spring water supposedly covers the cold shore waters of Yellowstone Lake, is but one of a large school of fish stories which have been kabojolized on a helpless Bridger.

Bridger found his way to the petrified standing tree in the park, when it was in a wilderness indeed; and even today with a good path, well signed, leading to it only about one in a thousand park visitors reach it. And for telling a listening world about this stump, Bridger's story came back to him in the echo, with everything in existence petrified. The mammoth hot springs terraces, though they are today exactly as Bridger originally described them, having terraces and pools of varying tem-

"Colonel Judson's record should have lasting fame * * * on account of his really remarkable literary achievements in the line of realistic romance, bringing into world-wide fame the last if not the most notable of American scouts and frontiersmen—"Buffalo Bill," "Wild Bill," "Texas Jack," and other fearless scouts of the plains, whose deeds of daring were no less thrilling than those of Daniel Boone and Kit Carson.

" * * * In fact it is safe to state that in the remarkable series descriptive of the adventures of the scouts of the plains the popular stories written by Ned Buntline had a far greater degree of accuracy as to depicting real scenes and incidents than any of (James Fenimore) Cooper's tales." (86)

The only mention of Bridger by Buntline that has come to our notice is in Buntline's "Buffalo Bill's Last Victory" in the *New York Weekly*, September 2, 1872. He says: "Indians are a . . . study . . . The mistake of making Indian agents . . . from men who know nothing of their real natures . . . has done more to . . . breed Indian wars than anything else . . . Give me such men as Major Bridger, W. F. Cody, J. Omohondro, (the real name of Texas Jack) . . . for . . . Indian agents . . . For *these* men known and respected, even as their prowess is feared by the Indians, would do justice to all with whom they dealt."

peratures to suit every need, became impossible creations of nature, which automatically separated the waters into different temperatures for fairy visitors who bathed at the imaginary fountains.

Little wonder then it is that the old scout, having a sense of humor and a knowledge gained at his own expense that the average person loves to be humbugged or entertained rather than enlightened, should at last toss the stories back again to a waiting world, with ears and mouth agape, embellished as only he could embellish them, with a knowledge of the facts as well as the fiction.

General Miles (68) relates one such story of Bridger's, though like most careful writers, he admits getting the story at second hand. "The story is told that on some such (story-telling) occasion, one night after supper, a comrade who in his travels and explorations had gone as far south as the Zuni village, New Mexico, and had discovered the famous petrified forest of Arizona, inquired of Bridger":

"Jim, were you ever down to Zuni?"

"No, thar ain't any beaver down thar."

"But Jim, there are some things in this world besides beaver, I was down there last winter and saw great trees with limbs and bark and all turned into stone.

"O," returned Jim, "that's petrification. Come with me to the Yellowstone next summer, and I'll show you petrified trees a-growing, with petrified birds on 'em a-singing petrified songs."

"Now it so happened that he had been to the Yellowstone," General Miles apologizes for him; "and had seen the 'petrified' trees standing but not the 'petrified' birds or the 'petrified' songs. The geysers of the Yellowstone eject hot water, supersaturated with carbonate of lime and geyserite, to a height of from one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet. This water is carried laterally by the wind, sometimes two hundred or three hundred feet, saturating the trees, and gradually covering the nearest side with a crystal formation, while on the other side are living branches. So Jim Bridger's story was in part true."

Other petrification stories are given by Chittenden (43). "According to Bridger's account there exists in the Park country a mountain which was once cursed by a great medicine man of the Crow nation. Every thing upon the mountain at the time of this dire event became instantly petrified and has remained so ever since. All forms of life are standing about in stone where they were suddenly caught by the petrifying influences, even as the inhabitants of ancient Pompeii were surprised by the ashes of

Vesuvius. Sage brush, grass, prairie fowl, antelope, elk, and bears, may there be seen as perfect as in actual life. Dashing torrents and the spray mist from them stand forth in arrested motion as if carved from rock by a sculptor's chisel. Even flowers are blooming in colors of crystal, and birds soar with wings spread in motionless flight, while the air floats with music and perfumes siliceous, and the sun and the moon shine with petrified light!"

"The author (General Chittenden) feels bound to defend even Bridger's reputation from any such extravaganza as the following which is clearly the work of some later interpolator. According to this anonymous authority, Bridger, one evening after a long day's ride, was approaching a familiar camping place in this region of petrifications but from a direction not before taken. Quite unexpectedly he came upon a narrow, deep, precipitous chasm which completely blocked his way. Exhausted as both he and his horse were with their long march, he was completely disheartened at this obstacle, to pass which, might cause him several hours of strenuous exertion and carry him far into the night.

"Riding up to the brink to reconnoiter he found that he could not stop his horse, which kept moving right along as if by its own momentum, out over the edge of the precipice, straight on at a steady gait and on a level line, as if supported by an invisible bridge. Almost before he realized it he was safe on the other side, and in his desired camp. His utter amazement at this miracle soon abated when he remembered the strange character of the country he was in, and he concluded that this chasm was simply a place where the attraction of gravitation was petrified."

General Chittenden tells how Bridger discovered the glass mountain (Obsidian Cliff). "Coming one day in sight of a magnificent elk, he took careful aim at the unsuspecting animal and fired. To his great amazement, the elk not only was not wounded but seemed not even to have heard the report of the rifle. Bridger drew considerably nearer and gave the elk the benefit of his most deliberate aim; but with the same result as before. A third and a fourth effort met with a similar fate."

"Utterly exasperated, he seized his rifle by the barrel, resolved to use it as a club, since it had failed as a firearm. Rushing madly toward the elk, he suddenly crashed into an immovable vertical wall which proved to be a mountain of perfectly transparent glass, on the farther side of which, still in peaceful security, the elk was quietly grazing. Stranger still, the mountain was not only of pure glass, but was a perfect telescopic lens, and, whereas, the elk seemed but a few hundred yards off, it was in reality twenty-five miles away."

Capt. J. Lee Humfreville (53) speaking of the fact that Bridger was much sought after by the emigrants crossing the plains,

since his reputation as a guide and Indian scout and fighter was well known, says: "The pilgrims annoyed him with all sorts of questions, which often compelled the old man to beat a retreat, yet he had a streak of humor, and gave them a ghost story every now and then. Some of these stories were unique. He had a quick and surprisingly vivid imagination, and reeled off story after story with a spontaneity that was astonishing. He told these stories, too, with a solemn gravity that was intensely amusing. I know that I am largely indebted to him for keeping up my spirits when they were at a low ebb. I always knew something good was coming when he began to tell a story, but never dared to smile until the climax was reached, for that would have spoiled it all."

Captain Humfreville gives another version of the petrification story, as Bridger presumably told it to a tenderfoot, looking for adventure. "Is there anything remarkable to be seen about here?" an inquisitive pilgrim asked him one day.

"'W-a-l-l,' he replied, in a peculiar drawling tone, which he generally assumed in telling stories, in order to gain time to give his imagination fuller play, "there's a cur'ous mountain a few miles off'n the road to the north of here, but the doggon'd trouble is you can't see the blamed thing."

"'A mountain and can't see it—that's curious,' interrupted the pilgrim. 'How large is it?'"

"'Wall, I should say it's nigh onto three miles in circumference at the base but its height is unknown,' continued Bridger with imperturbable gravity.

"'Is it so high you can't see the top of it?' inquired the puzzled traveler.

"'That's what I say, stranger; you can't see the base of it either. Didn't you ever hear of the Crystal Mountain?'"

"'I never did.'

"'Wall, I'll tell you what it is. It's a mountain of crystal rock, an' so clear that the most powerful field glasses can't see it, much less the naked eye. You'll wonder, p'r'aps, how a thing that can't be seen nohow wus ever discovered. It came about in this way. You see, a lot of bones and the carcasses of animals an' birds wus found scattered all around the base. You see they ran or flew against this invisible rock and jest killed themselves dead. You kin feel the rock an' that's all. You can't see it. It's a good many miles high, for everlastin' quantities of bird's bones are jest piled up all around the base of it.'"

Bridger is said to have had a unique method for determining the altitude of a place, according to Chittenden (43) "At the point whose elevation is desired, bore down until salt water is reached, and then measure the distance."

Bridger's famous echo is described by Chittenden. "Opposite a certain camping ground where he frequently stopped there arose

the bald, flat face of a mountain, but so distant that the echo from any sound which originated in camp did not return for the space of about six hours. Bridger converted this circumstance into an ideal alarm clock. Upon retiring for the night he would call out lustily, "Time to Get Up!" and true to his calculation, the alarm would roll back at the precise hour next morning when it was necessary for the camp to bestir itself."

Colonel Inman (70) declared that Bridger told him "and also many others, at various times, that in the winter of 1830 it began to snow in the valley of the Great Salt Lake, and continued for seventy days without cessation. The whole country was covered to a depth of seventy feet, and all the vast herds of buffalo were caught in the storm and died, but their carcasses were perfectly preserved."

"When spring came, all I had to do," declared he, 'was to tumble 'em into Salt Lake an' I had pickled buffalo enough for myself and the whole Ute nation for years!' He said that on account of that terrible storm which annihilated them, there have been no buffalo in that region since."²⁷

It would seem that the few stories which make Bridger an inebriate are kabojolisms. The earliest reference of the kind appears to have been made by Clappitt (71) who visited Fort Bridger in 1866, and issued a book of 'Echoes' in 1888. A specimen echo concerns Fort Bridger and its builder, who, contrary to the import of the echo, had not lived there for over twelve years. Clearly Clappitt did not see Bridger, but wrote from hearsay if not somewhat at random.

"Here lived old Judge Carter, the sutler of this fort," says Clappitt, "a man of large wealth, considerable education, and many quaint manners. The traveler was always welcome at his hospitable board and never failed to praise his good stabling and liquors; for the 'Judge' was famous in all that broad expanse for his discriminating taste in the selection of his wine and cigars.

"Here likewise lived another noted character of the solitudes,

27. "Before leaving Black Rock (a small island in the south end of Great Salt Lake), I made an experiment upon the properties of the water of the lake for preserving meat (11). A large piece of fresh beef was suspended by a cord and immersed in the lake for rather more than twelve hours when it was found to be tolerably well corned. After this, all the beef we wished to preserve while operating upon the lake was packed into barrels without any salt whatever, and the vessels were then filled up with the lake water. No further care or preparation was necessary; and the meat kept perfectly sweet, although constantly exposed to the sun. I have no doubt that meats put up in this water would remain sound and good as long as if prepared after the most approved methods. Indeed, we were obliged to mix fresh water with this natural brine to prevent our meat from becoming too salt for present use—a very few days immersion changing its character from corned beef to what the sailors call "salt junk."

old Jim Bridger, after whom the pass was named. He was a famous trapper and hunter, who had dwelt for many years in that region before the advent of the white men. He had a squaw for a wife and a large family of half-breeds. He was a brave and fearless soldier of these Alpine heights and bore the scars of many honorable conflicts. He was noted far and wide for his many quaint sayings and possessed great powers of storytelling, and loved to dwell upon the reminiscences of his strange life when the cockles of his heart were warmed by a few strong and deep potations. Old Bridger said he 'never in all his life and varied fortunes saw any bad whiskey. It was all good! True, some was better than another, but it was all good! There never was any bad whiskey!'"

Against this reputation we find Colonel Dodge (72), after a long personal association with Bridger, saying: "Bridger was rather looked down upon because he was sober and frugal." Another characterization from a trustworthy source appears in the reminiscences of Frank A. Root (64).

"In January, 1866, I met the jolly old frontiersman at Atchison, just as he had come down by the overland stage coach from his home in the mountains, on his way to Westport, Mo., to visit the scenes of his boyhood days," writes Mr. Root. "He was then in the employ of the government as guide and interpreter. In 1865 he was on General Connor's staff. He was a native of Virginia, but settled in western Missouri when very young."

"During his long pioneer life in the mountains he had become a shrewd trader, a good judge of stock, and few, apparently, could get the better of him in a horse or mule trade. In the later years of his life he was rather uncouth in dress, not very polite in manners, extremely fond of tobacco, and would occasionally take a drink 'for his stomach's sake.' He was a good talker, with a wonderful memory, could tell lots of interesting stories, and those intimately acquainted with him said it was a pleasure to sit and converse with him about early days on the plains and life in the Rocky Mountains."

The historical novel must be allowed a wide latitude, under the law of literary license; but the license is apt to expire when actual characters, as actual as James Bridger, are incorporated conspicuously into a fictionalized fabric, as the talented shades of Emerson Hough (73) could doubtless testify. Mr. Hough is entitled to a requiescat, however, for the same reason a certain editor evaded libel; nothing he had written was true of the complainant; hence, another James Bridger was undoubtedly meant! The experiences of Hough's Bridger, with a plurality of spouses, a thirst for liquor, a tricky memory and all, were not intended to be facts, we may be sure, any more than were the details of his conversations with Molly Wingate. As a fiction character, however,

this pseudo Bridger is a decided success, as is Drannan's versatile but fictitious Bridger (83).

Possibly it should be observed here also, that General Brisbin's (74) story of James Bridger's bear fight was an innocent fabrication, harmful only to the doubtful historian; the story was borrowed from Captain Marcy (49), Bridger's name being supplied for good measure by the general. Thomas' imputation: (75) "after he (Bridger) had taken a few drinks, he loved to tell of the strange things that had happened during his past life" is but a sentence in a close paraphrase of Clappitt's echoes.

"A friend accidentally came across him sitting on a dry goods box in one of the narrow streets in Kansas City, evidently disgusted with his situation," declares Colonel Inman (70). "To the inquiry as to what he was doing there all alone, the old man replied: 'I've been settin' in this infernal canyon ever since mornin', waitin' for some one to come along an' invite me to take a drink. Hundreds of fellers has passed both ways, but none of 'em has opened his head. I never seen sich an onsociable crowd!'"

The real fact seems to be—if we may pay a just tribute to several well known authors of the old school—that James Bridger was excelled as a historical romancer by a number of writers, including some that were willing to transfer the palm for this achievement to Bridger.

Captain Humfreville gives a short version of a popular and widely circulated tale of personal adventure credited to Bridger. "He had been suddenly surprised by a party of six Indians, and putting spurs to his horse sought to escape. The Indians, mounted on fleet ponies, quickly followed in pursuit. His only weapon was a six-shooter. The moment the leading Indian came within shooting distance, he turned in his saddle and gave him a shot. His shot always meant a dead Indian. In this way he picked off five of the Indians, but the last one kept up the pursuit relentlessly and refused to be shaken off."

"'We wus nearin' the edge of a deep and wide gorge,' said Bridger. 'No horse could leap over that awful chasm, an' a fall to the bottom meant sartin death. (This has been said to be the Grand Canyon of the Colorado). I turned my horse suddint an' the Injun was upon me. We both fired to once, an' both horses wus killed. We now engaged in a han'-to-han' conflict with butcher knives. He wus a powerful Injun—tallest I ever see. It wus a long and fierce struggle. One moment I hed the best of it, an' the next the odds wus agin me. Finally——'"

"Here Bridger paused as if to get breath.

"'How did it end?' at length asked one of his breathless listeners anxiously.

"'The Injun killed me,' he replied with slow deliberation."

In Bridger's more advanced years, he sometimes became less patient with those who pestered him. Captain Humfreville tells us an instance of this change of heart, and the reason for it. "The wagon trains crossing the plains at that time were very numerous, and usually before leaving the starting points along the Missouri River, the emigrants bought little guide books for 10 cents, giving the location of good water, and grass along the road. Hence it frequently happened that camp was made at night where not a spear of grass was to be found for the horses and cattle, it having been consumed by the thousands that had camped there before.

"Then the travelers called on Bridger and asked him where the next good camping place was. The information was cheerfully given, and the travelers immediately turned to their guide books, and not finding mention of the locality, would accuse Bridger of deceiving them, which was very annoying, and did not increase his regard for the pilgrims. Sometimes he would sit for hours and act as if deaf and dumb, in order to put a stop to the silly questions of travelers."

Bridger measured his mountain years by the circumstance that yon hill, any hill that stood near, was a hole in the ground when he went West; and he measured the fertility of the soil by the circumstance that a stone he threw across the Sweetwater grew up as Independence Rock, or any other boulder that chanced to be near the speaker at the moment. But it is hardly fair to these venerable stories to attribute their origin to Bridger, for they were probably hoary with senility when Bridger was born; and they were to suffer regeneration at the hands of the Arkansas Traveler. Hence Bridger's use of these remarks was probably out of deference to his hearers, who might better understand if he spoke in terms with which they were familiar.

Concerning Bridger's struggles against the reputation of exaggeration in connection with his western descriptions, N. P. Langford relates some interesting facts (67). "I first became acquainted with Bridger in 1866," writes Mr. Langford. "He was then employed by a wagon road company, of which I was president, to conduct the emigration from the states to Montana by way of Fort Laramie, the Big Horn River and Emigrant Gulch.

"He told me in Virginity City, Montana, at that time, of the existence of hot, spouting springs in the vicinity of

the source of the Yellowstone and Madison rivers, and said that he had seen a column of water as large as his body, spout as high as the flagpole in Virginia City, which was about sixty feet high. The more I pondered upon this statement the more I was impressed with the probability of its truth. If he had told me of the existence of falls one thousand feet high I should have considered his story an exaggeration of a phenomenon he had really beheld; but I did not think that his imagination was sufficiently fertile to originate the story of the existence of a spouting geyser, unless he had really seen one, and I therefore was inclined to give credit to his statement, and to believe that such a wonder did really exist."

Langford was historian and chronicler for the first official party of explorers in the Yellowstone Park country, and he himself experienced some of the humiliation Bridger had suffered. "The articles written by me on my return from the trip described in this diary," he writes (67), "and published in *Scribner's* (now *Century*) magazine for May and June, 1871, were regarded more as the amiable exaggerations of an enthusiastic Munchausen, who is disposed to tell the whole truth, and as much more as is necessary to make an undoubted sensation, than as the story of a sober, matter-of-fact observer who tells what he has seen with his own eyes, and exaggerates nothing.

"Doctor Holland, one of the editors of that magazine, sent to me a number of uncomplimentary criticisms of my article. One reviewer said: 'This Langford must be the champion liar of the Northwest.' Resting for a time under this imputation, I confess to a feeling of satisfaction in reading from a published letter, written later in the summer of 1871, from the upper geyser basin by a member of the U. S. Geological Survey, the words: 'Langford did not dare tell one-half of what he saw.'"

General Chittenden (43) gives an instance of a return of confidence in Bridger, which we must regret could not have been more general. "The editor of a leading western paper stated, in 1879, that Bridger had told him of the Yellowstone wonders fully thirty years before. He pre-

pared an article from his description and then suppressed it 'because a man who claimed to know Bridger told him he would be laughed out of town if he printed any of Old Jim Bridger's lies.' In later years this editor publicly apologized to Bridger for having doubted his statements."

Richard F. Burton's tribute also deserves a place herein, written about August, 1860 (63). "The fort was built by Col. James Bridger, now the oldest trapper on the Rocky Mountains, of whom Messrs. Fremont and Stansbury have both spoken in the highest terms. He divides with Christopher Carson, the Kit Carson of the Wind River and the Sierra Nevada explorations, the honor of being the best guide and interpreter in the Indian country: the palm for prudence is generally given to the former; for dash and hard fighting to the latter—although it is said, the mildest mannered of men."

CHAPTER LI

SCOUTING AGAIN FOR THE ARMY

IN the summer of 1861 Bridger was summoned to the mountains again by Messrs. Russell and Holladay of the overland staging company to act as a guide for Engineer E. L. Berthoud in the exploration and survey of a new and more direct route between Denver and Salt Lake City for the use of the stage and freighting travel. Bridger knew the country thoroughly and made the general selection of the route, which was surveyed by Captain Berthoud and his men. The route led over the continental divide at Berthoud Pass, and thence almost due west to Provo, Utah, following down the west slope of the Rocky Mountains into the White River bottoms to Green River, and thence up the Duchesne River basin.

The distance between Golden and Provo was only four hundred and thirteen miles, being a saving of nearly two hundred and fifty miles over the old overland route through Wyoming; but the Civil War, and then the building of the Union Pacific Railroad, prevented the construction of this road. However, Bridger's short cut between Denver and Salt Lake has for many years been a general thoroughfare, and in recent years has been the approximate route of the Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean automobile trail and the Victory Highway, a part of the way, while a new railroad survey follows almost exactly the same course.

Relating some of his experiences with Bridger that summer, Captain Berthoud wrote Frederick S. Dellenbaugh (80), "Bridger would tell in camp of the canyon of the Colorado and Green River and of the almost utter impossibility of getting water from either canyon, although in full sight of an abundance of it, which I bitterly experienced when trying to explore down Green River, south of the White River in Utah in 1861." This same authority implies, by a brief re-telling of the narratives

by Bridger, that the old scout had companions on his journey of discovery to the Great Salt Lake in 1824. "They all spit out the water and Bridger exclaimed, 'Hell, we are on the shore of the Pacific!' From where they stood looking southwest no land appeared beyond the lake horizon but Stansbury Island." This remark, however, proves nothing conclusively; it may easily be a slight variation from the exact words used by Bridger in speaking to his comrades of the Cache valley that winter. Captain Berthoud became quite intimately acquainted with Bridger, "and he states further that he believed that when Bridger was consulted as to facts he was truth itself, but that when he wished to tell stories he was most skillful."

His practiced eye in selecting a route through the mountains seldom failed him, and where the deception of perspective often deceived the unwary, Bridger was quick to discern the facts. Asked which of two indicated passes was the lower, he quickly designated the one which in the perspective seemed higher; and on being questioned more closely insisted that he was right, and urged the engineers to "put their clocks on 'em" for proof. This they did, and found from the aneroid barometer tests that the old scout was right.

The old scout returned that fall to the Missouri farm, which he had kept rented to tenants, and who for a time at least had the care of some of Bridger's children. Early in 1862 he bought a good home in Westport, near by (1), and placed his children there in the care of another tenant family. His own domicile, however, was the West, whither he was drawn like a magnetized metal particle. He retained an interest for some years in Bridger's Ferry above Fort Laramie, and besides his many valuable friendships and his sheer love for the mountains, he probably had business connections at Fort Laramie and elsewhere. Then there was always the prospect of picking up new business in his line.

Thus, while at the Little Santa Fe farm, in the spring of 1862, the old scout was pleased to receive a call from

the government to guide an official party to Utah. William S. Brackett, a member of this expedition, has written a brief record of the journey (87), from whom we gain a glimpse of Bridger in action.

"Looking back nearly thirty-five years, I can recall the beauty and romance of eventful days when I camped with James Bridger on the Sweetwater, and with him marched across the continent. . . .

"In the spring of 1862, President Lincoln had appointed two distinguished legal gentlemen as judges of the Supreme Court of the territory of Utah, and it was necessary that they should be escorted from the Missouri River to Salt Lake City, through a real wilderness then infested by various tribes of hostile Indians. It fell to my lot to be one of an expedition which had for its object the safe convey of the new judges to the domain of Brigham Young.

"Our expedition rendezvoused at St. Joseph, Mo., where wagons, horses, arms and camp equipage were put in the best possible condition for the long march, and it was a matter of congratulation that our chief scouts and guides had received from the government and were armed with a gun that was at that time considered the best in the world, viz.: a muzzle loading rifle, carrying an ounce minie ball, and fresh from the United States arsenal at Harper's Ferry.

. . .
"I can remember well the beautiful June afternoon in 1862 when we crossed the Platte at Julesburg. . . .

"It was to me a most interesting circumstance on our march to Utah, that we traveled along the trail where Captain Bonneville marched his favorite expedition to the Rocky Mountains, in 1832. Our camp fires were often lit, probably, in the same places where his own once burned. Certain it is that at the Chimney Rock we camped on the very ground where the old hero had camped. This information was given us by the scout, James Bridger, who was with us. He had been with Bonneville in 1832-33. . . .

"It has been a great regret to me that I did not get more information from Bridger, who was then with us in the employ of the government, concerning Captain Bonneville and his famous expedition. Bridger had been with Bonneville, and his own history as yet unrecorded and only partly known, undoubtedly would be as interesting and as full of adventure, if known, as that of Kit Carson, or any scout or frontiersman known in our history. He was past middle age when he acted as our guide. The portrait of him here given was sent to me by Hon. N. P. Langford, of St. Paul, Minn., who in 1865 employed Bridger as a guide and scout in Montana. . . .

"In person Bridger was tall and spare, but erect, active and energetic. His hair was brown and long and covered his head abundantly even in old age. His eyes were gray and keen; his

habitual expression was mild, and his manners kind and agreeable. He was, like most old mountaineers, very generous and hospitable, and was respected and trusted by white men and Indians alike. He always treated Indians with justice, and had their confidence to a high degree. His wife was an Indian woman of the Shoshone tribe.

"He knew the great geysers of the Firehole Valley in Yellowstone Park as early as 1840, and visited them about 1844 (sic). He described them too, but most men disbelieved him at the time. His descriptions are now proved to be accurate and truthful. Bridger keenly felt the suspicious cast on his honesty and truthfulness, as to the wonders of the Yellowstone. Disgusted at his unmerited treatment and angered at the talk about 'Old Jim Bridger's lies,' he retaliated as so many other mountain men have done, by stuffing his 'tenderfoot' listeners with the most preposterous stories his imagination could conjure up.

"The truth is that when Bridger 'drew the long bow' he founded his romances on a great deal of fact, if his hearers only had the wit and sense to sift it out. In this way the old scout avenged himself for the distrust previously shown for his accurate and truthful accounts of many of the wonders he had seen in the Rocky Mountains. I have known many an old timer to do the same thing when an audience of smart 'tenderfeet' laughed or sneered at a truthful recital of something marvelous in the former's experience.

"The testimony of scores of prominent military commanders and civilians can be produced showing that James Bridger was always to be trusted and believed in as a guide, scout, trader, and all round pioneer. His idle tales were told only to idle people in idle hours. At heart he was as truthful as he was skillful and brave. He never betrayed any man and was never untrue to any trust, public or private. I am always glad to look at his everlasting monument in Montana; that grand mountain peak near the city of Bozeman overlooking the beautiful Gallatin Valley, and named in honor of him.

"Looking back at our beautiful camps of long ago in the sixties, under the shadow of the Chimney Rock and Scotts Bluffs, I can faintly recall the face and form of James Bridger the scout. A silent old fellow he was; close mouthed with all except the commander of our force. Occasionally, however, when closely questioned he would tell some outrageously improbable story that would be greeted with hilarious laughter by our men as they sat around the campfires, and make a general butt of the person asking the question. Although Bridger never spoke in detail of Bonneville's expedition except to speak of our following the same trail and camping in the same places, I have always thought of the two men together, and hence have written of them together in this paper.

"... General Bonneville himself sets this question at rest (his knowledge of the Yellowstone region) in his most interesting

letter published in Volume I, page 105, of the publications of the Historical Society of Montana. He says in this letter written from Fort Smith, Ark.:

"You ask me if I knew of the thermal springs and geysers. Not personally, but my men knew about them and called their location 'The Fire Hole.' I recollect the name of Alvarez as a trader. I think he came to the mountains as I was leaving them. Half a century is a long time to look back, and I do so doubting myself. . . .

"The last Sunday in June, 1862, was a bright and peaceful day. Our men were cleaning up their arms, saddles and equipments. Quite a number of our best shots had gone off into the hills hunting. There was no thought of Indians, for no Indians had been seen by us for many days. Late in the afternoon as the men were starting the fires to cook supper, we saw a strange white man riding toward our camp in hot haste. Down the valley he swiftly came, until he was stopped by one of our outpost guards who rode forward to meet him. After a short parley his tired horse came galloping to our camp.

"'Indians! Indians!' he shouted as he threw himself off his horse and came up to our commanding officer. The man reported that his camp, five miles back to the eastward, on the ground we passed over the day before, had been attacked and that two men were killed. A few questions were asked him by Bridger, and then the bugles rang out 'boots and saddles.'

"Twenty picked men, under a sergeant, were ordered to proceed at once to the scene of the tragedy. Several others were permitted to accompany the force, one of our federal judges and myself among the number. James Bridger was ordered to go along also, and to carefully observe all Indian signs and make report to our commander. Our train was known to all emigrants along the road as 'the government train' because we had United States troops to escort the federal judges and their families. Hence, in case of attack or alarm from Indians, the emigrants often came to our camp.

"We learned from the strange man as we rode along that his wagon train of twelve or fifteen wagons had been straggling along the trail in single line, and that when the rear wagon was far behind and out of sight, a war party of Indians had suddenly swooped down upon it, had killed both men and run off with the team of horses. . . .

"After a hard gallop of some five miles we came up with the emigrants in camp. Their wagons were parked in a circle with their horses and fires inside, and armed men marched about on guard. . . .

" . . . I was riding with Bridger over a long hill when we came upon the wagon that had been attacked, and the horribly mutilated bodies of the two men. About a hundred yards from the

wagon on the trail we came first to the body of an old man. At the instant of attack he had probably jumped out and run toward the other far off wagons. He was shot through the back and his head was fairly chopped to pieces with tomahawks, and the ax taken from the wagon lay beside him, covered with blood. His body was filled with arrows, and he was scalped and horribly mutilated. . . .

"Bridger calmly dismounted, knelt on the ground and closely examined the foot prints around the body. Then he pulled three arrows from the old man's corpse and closely examined them. 'Arapahoes and Cheyennes,' he said, as he followed the blood creases on the arrows with critical eyes.

"Leaving the first body, he went up to the wagon and found pieces of harness cut with knives scattered about. The Indians had got the harness off the horses by cutting nearly every strap. At one side lay the body of a young man who had been an invalid and was going to California for his health. Firmly clutched in his bloody right hand was a Colt's revolver with four chambers empty. The Indians had vainly cut this hand many times trying to get the pistol, but the grip of death held it firmly. Three bullets had pierced his body, and he was also scalped and mutilated. A dozen arrows bristled horribly upward from his prostrate corpse. With fiendish malignity the savages had cut off his ears, nose, and the fingers of his left hand, and laid them on his body. Both eyes were obliterated and other dreadful brutalities had been enacted which are simply unspeakable.

"As soon as Bridger saw the pistol he walked around the wagon in a circle, carefully examining the grass and sage brush. Suddenly he stooped and seized a piece of sage brush and broke it off. On it was a speck of blood. Widening his search he soon found more blood and came back saying:

"The boy has peppered one of the scamps, anyway!' All around on the ground the Indians had scattered rice, flour, coffee and sugar in their hasty plundering of the wagons. Of course, they carried off both horses. . . .

"Wrapping the poor mutilated bodies in blankets we laid them in the wagon they had often slept in during life. They were afterward given decent burial by their friends of the emigrant train. Under Bridger's guidance our command then hunted for the trail of the Indians. Bridger said they were about twenty in number, and were doubtless, by this time, far on the other side of the Sweet-water on their scampering ponies, safe from capture or successful pursuit. A picked force of fifteen cavalrymen was afterwards sent on the trail of the savages, but failed to overtake them during their pursuit of five or six days.

"Our expedition afterward proceeded without remarkable incident, to Salt Lake City, where the two federal judges were received

with many friendly attentions by both Mormons and Gentiles. Brigham Young called in person on them at the Townsend House, then the principal hotel; and several companies of Mormon cavalry then in service of the United States, came out and escorted us through Echo canyon. These Mormons were fine riders and were all well mounted and armed, and were more efficient in the pursuit and punishment of hostile Indians than either regular troops or eastern volunteers."

Bridger returned to Fort Laramie among congenial spirits, where he is ushered into the spotlight again by two letters written by Lieut. Caspar W. Collins to his mother in Hillsboro, Ohio, dated September 30 and October 8, 1862, at Fort Halleck and Fort Laramie, respectively (40).

Young Collins, then about eighteen years of age, was with his father, Lieut.-Col. William O. Collins, not as a soldier, but as a companion; yet it was his fate to be in the midst of an Indian fight, as a first lieutenant, on July 26, 1865, in which he was killed. The town of Casper, Wyoming, near where he was killed, was named for him; and the town of Fort Collins, Colorado, was named for his father. The father had employed Bridger at Fort Laramie in the fall of 1862 to pilot his party over the unknown country between that point and Fort Halleck, situated near Elk Mountain, an outlier of the Medicine Bow range in Wyoming.

"We arrived at this point last night," the young man wrote from Fort Halleck. . . . "We left Laramie six days ago and occupied the whole time making the trip. For the first few days we had nothing to eat but fat pork, etc., but at last we killed two antelope, and some mountain grouse, sage hens and ducks. The party consisted of my father, Lieutenant Glenn, the wagon master, Sergeant Morris, two privates, . . . myself, a teamster, Major Bridger and the cook. . . . We camped two nights in the rain and sleet without any tent, and had a rather disagreeable time, but by burrowing in the bedclothes we got along tolerably well. . . . We are invited to a feast given by John Esse, a French trapper with a Sioux wife and ten or twelve halfbreed children. My father thinks it is going to be a dog feast and I do not think he will go. I may. This mountain . . . abounds in game, the boys having killed a good many elk and deer, and several times single hunters have been chased by grizzlyls. Nine have been seen together almost within

the fort. Only one has been killed around here, but a good many have been shot."

"We are going to explore another road across the Black Hills to Fort Laramie. The mail runs through here. . . . We are occupying a tent heated from an underground furnace, which makes it very comfortable. . . . The men have their stables built but have not got their houses done. Some of them are working for the sutler and get from him a dollar and a half a day. . . . Some Mexican teamsters have built themselves a house partly underground, which can be made as hot as a bake oven by a fireplace in one corner. . . . I rode a mule over the whole trip and prefer them to horses to travel on. We had corn for our animals the whole trip and very good grass. This is the windiest place I ever saw—a hurricane blowing the whole time. It is a beautiful place, however. . . . We will probably take about seven or eight days going back."

From Fort Laramie, on arrival, he wrote again, October 8. "We arrived here from Fort Halleck yesterday. We had a very pleasant trip through the mountains. We came through on a new road never before traveled by anybody except Indians. We killed a great many antelope between that Fort and this. In the mountains we did not see very much game, as the Indians have been hunting all through them and killed and scared all the game away. . . . The wagon master, Lieutenant Glenn, Sergeants Morris and Herman of Company C, four soldiers, including our hunting friend Roberts, and the teamster and cook (and Bridger) made up our party. I killed hares and rabbits, sage and prairie chickens, grouse and ducks and any other game in reach of duck-shot. My father killed two very large antelope. . . . There is some of the grandest scenery you ever saw, through the Black Hills. Immense piles of rock, covered with pines, and beautiful valleys of grass that is up to your waist. They are full of clear springs, which burst out and sink in the ground as soon as they reach the plains below."

"We had Major Bridger with us as a guide. He knows more of the Rocky Mountains than any living man. He came to this country about forty years ago in command of a party of thirty or forty trappers, and some time after, with some others, he organized the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, which drove the Hudson's Bay Company from American soil. He is totally uneducated, but speaks English, Spanish, and French, equally well besides nearly a dozen Indian tongues, such as Snake, Bannock, Crow, Flathead, Nez Perce, Pend Oreille, Ute, and one or two others I cannot recollect.

"He has been in many Indian battles and has several arrow wounds, besides being hit so as almost to break his neck. Under him, Kit Carson first made his acquaintance with the Rocky Mountain region, and he traveled through them while Fremont was a

child. It is very dull to come here to this post. I always dread it when I am out on a march. Every day is the same except the changes of weather. The bugle commences blowing the first thing in the morning, and is tooting away when you are in bed at night. The same calls all the time."

A faint mountain echo of Bridger's past is heard in Capt. James Stuart's journal of The Yellowstone Expedition of 1863 (Mont. Hist. Soc. Cont., Vol. 1, 1876).

This party moved from Bannack City, near Dillon, April 9, 1863, going easterly and northerly.

"April 29, 1863. . . . About sundown we saw two Indians coming; we concluded there were more behind; drove in and tied up the horses. We let them come into camp without moving or saying a word. They sat on their horses a few minutes, taking a mental inventory of the crowd. The head man then asked for our chief. I responded, and he then dismounted, pulled off his saddle, sat down on it, pulled off his hat, took a roll of something out of it, and, after undoing sundry wrappers, opened it and displayed a paper from Schoonover, Indian agent at Fort Union, at the mouth of the Yellowstone River, which stated that the bearer was 'Red Bear,' one of the principal chiefs of the Crow nation.

"We gave them some supper, etc. He then presented me with a black horse; said he was all right; friend of ours, etc. Had a long talk with him, in the course of which he asked about old Jim Bridger, and also Peter Martin, desiring to know where they were and why they never came to see the Crows any more. The other Crows had told me that the Sioux had attacked the Fur Company's Express boat from Fort Benton, near Fort Union, and some said they had taken it, and others said they had killed some of the crew, but had not captured the boat. I asked Red Bear if it was so, and he replied that a rumor to that effect was current among the tribes, but he did not know whether it was so or not." . . .

May 3, 1863. "We camped three miles below Pompey's Pillar, on which we found the names of Captain Clarke and two of his men cut in the rock, with the date July 25, 1806. Fifty-seven years ago. And it is probable that this landscape then looked precisely the same as it does now."

"There are also two more names cut here which I never heard of before. But I suppose they must have belonged to some of the bands of trappers that, under old Jim Bridger, the Sublettes, and Bonneville, made this their hunting ground. The names are Derick and Vancourt, and the accompanying date is May 23, 1834."

The War Department files show that Bridger was at Fort Laramie on August 18, 1863, and was then and there employed by Lieut. O. S. Glenn, acting assistant quartermaster, as a guide and interpreter at \$5 a day. He continued in this employment until April

30, 1864, when he was discharged temporarily. The Indian problem was paramount in the West at that time, and the overland route was under very close guard, while the back-country was scoured as opportunity afforded for the purpose of establishing contact with the Indians, in an effort to keep the peace, and to better understand their situation.

It was presumably at this time, the late summer of 1863, that Bridger piloted Capt. J. Lee Humfreville and party on a scouting trip into the South Park of Colorado. Some Arapahoe Indians accompanied the party, including a white man having an Arapahoe Indian wife. Captain Humfreville mentions the journey in connection with a report of an instance of Bridger's bravery.

"After a sharp engagement with a war party of Indians," the captain's narrative runs, "who greatly outnumbered us, we were compelled to withdraw to the hillside. As soon as the Indians saw our position a number of warriors dismounted and hid themselves in the bushes and tall grasses; from this concealment they began firing upon us. I did not consider it advisable for the time being, to separate the command and send a party to charge into the ambush. Bridger all this time was growing restless, and at last challenged an Arapahoe to go into the copse with him and attack the Indians hand to hand. The Indian refused and Bridger abused him soundly by means of the sign language. The Indian at last grasped Bridger by the hand, and the two started. It was not long before I heard the report of a six-shooter, and in a few minutes Bridger returned holding in his hand the scalp of a warrior covered with warm blood; he found an Indian in the brush and before the latter had time to move had killed him.

"The Arapahoe not returning, I was satisfied that his earthly career was ended, or that a worse fate was in store for him. I determined to burn the tall dry grass, and ordered the white man with the Indian wife to send one of the Arapahoe Indians to set it on fire; they all refused, until Bridger ridiculed them so unmercifully that the whole party accompanied him, and the grass was fired. It burned rapidly, and it was not long before the fierce flames disclosed a great many Indians hidden in the underbrush. When the command opened fire upon them, they ran in every direction; but soon returned with their mounted warriors ready to resume the fight. Bridger insisted that under no circumstances must we leave our present position, as there were at least two or three Indians to one of us. In a short time they made an attack, but we had the advantage of high ground and could anticipate every move that they made. Bridger picked off the first Indian who got within range of his deadly rifle, and the best shots among the troopers also used their Spencer carbines with effect. The Indians were thus prevented from getting near us, and after a few hours of this kind of fighting they withdrew."

The following narrative by Humfreville of a winter with Bridger is understood to have been at Fort Laramie in the winter of 1863-64, when Bridger was retained for emergency use because Indian attacks were so frequent and disastrous along the mail line.

"I occupied the same quarters with him one whole winter, where I had ample opportunity to study his character and learn his peculiar ways and manner of living. He never did anything until he felt so inclined. For instance, if he grew sleepy in the afternoon, say by three, four, or five o'clock, he went to bed, and when he awoke, say in four, five or six hours afterward, he would rise, make a fire, roast meat, eat it, and sing 'Injun,' to use his own term, the rest of the night. If he had a tin pan, he turned it bottom side up, and with a stick, beat on the bottom, making a noise like the Indian tom tom. He never ate until he was hungry, and as he lived largely on meat he was thin and spare, although strong and wiry.

"His manner of living during the winter did not coincide with my habits or ideas, by any means, so I tried to entertain him every afternoon and keep him awake until nine or ten o'clock in the evening. My first effort was in reading to him. A copy of *Hiawatha* was found among the troops, which I read to him as long as he permitted it. He would sit bent over, his long legs crossed, his gaunt hands and arms clasping his knees, and listen to the reading attentively, until a passage was reached in which Longfellow portrayed an imaginary Indian when Bridger, after a period of uneasy wriggling on his seat, arose very wrathful and swearing that the whole story was a lie, that he would listen to no more of it, and that "No such Injun ever lived." This happened over and over again. After awhile I quieted him and began reading again, but after a short time he was sure to stop me swearing that he would not listen any longer to such infernal lies. However, I managed to entertain him in this way for two or three weeks, during which time I secured a reasonable amount of sleep out of each twenty-four hours.

"Bridger became very much interested in this reading and asked which was the best book that had ever been written. I told him that Shakespeare's was supposed to be the greatest book. Thereupon he made a journey to the main road and lay in wait for a wagon train and sought a copy from some emigrants, paying for it with a yoke of cattle, which at that time could have been sold for \$125. He hired a German boy from one of the wagon trains at \$40 a month to read to him. The boy was a good reader and Bridger took great interest in the reading, listening most attentively for hours at a time. Occasionally he got the thread of the story so mixed that he would swear a blue streak, then compel the young man to stop, turn back, and re-read a page or two, until he could get the story straightened out. This continued until he became so hopelessly involved in reading *Richard the Third*, that he declared he 'Wouldn't listen any more to the talk of any man who was mean

enough to kill his mother.' That ended our reading of Shakespeare, much to my disgust, for I was again doomed to be kept awake at all hours of the night by his aboriginal habits. After that it was amusing to hear Bridger quote Shakespeare. He could give quotation after quotation, and was always ready to do so. Sometimes he seasoned them with a broad oath, so ingeniously inserted as to make it appear to the listener that Shakespeare himself had used the same language.

"During that winter Bridger's suit of buckskin clothing (and it was all he had) became infested with vermin, and in despair he at last asked me how he could get rid of them. I told him that if he would take off his buckskin jacket and breeches and wrap himself in a buffalo robe, I would undertake to rid his clothing of the pests. He thereupon took his clothing off and turned it inside out. After spreading the garments on the ground, I poured a ridge of powder down all the seams of the suit, and touching it off, burned the vermin, but the process also burned the buckskin clothing badly. On the seams of the leggings I had sprinkled so much powder that it burnt the garments to charred leather. They were drawn up short at the seams, and after being turned, each leg curled up until it looked like a half moon. Bridger looked at me for an instant in great disgust, and with a big oath said, 'I'm goin' to kill you for that.' I was afraid he would make his threat good, for he was certainly very indignant. I laughed at him and taking hold of the leggings stretched them into the best shape possible, but the leather was burned to brittleness, and the breeches broke at the slightest touch. Bridger did not forgive me for this for two or three days, during which time he was compelled to go about in a buffalo robe until another buckskin suit could be procured. Every time he saw his ruined suit he blessed me, saying, 'The next time you want to rid me an' my clo's of varmints don't you do it with a doggon'd train of gunpowder.'"

Bridger of course thought the captain would have some effective means of eradicating lice that was unknown to the trappers. Had it been summer time he would have delighted in resorting to the usual method of the frontiersman, of laying the garments out on an ant hill for a few minutes, while these busy workers carried off the last louse, and its progeny.

"During the winter we roomed together," continued Humfreville in another connection, "Bridger told me many interesting stories of early life, one of which was that of killing a mule. It is well known that during the night when everything is still, animals will approach a fire, their eyes shining like fire-balls; the hunter then aimed directly between the eyes and fired, which was sure to kill. This mode of killing animals was common among all hunters of the plains and mountains, and was known as flashing. When a young man Bridger was trapping with a party on Green River; during

the night he heard a noise, and looking in the direction whence it came, saw a pair of eyes flash, and taking deadly aim with his rifle, fired. Going to the spot, where he expected to find a deer or elk that he had killed, to his horror he found that he had shot a fine mule between the eyes, killing it instantly. For this mule Bridger was compelled to work two years without one cent of pay."

Bridger's viewpoint, and his importance to the army are noticed by Humfreville in another connection, the captain having been much in the field with the old scout.

"James Bridger, or as he was familiarly spoken of in that country, 'Old Jim Bridger,' was the most efficient guide, mountaineer, plainsman, trapper and Indian fighter that ever lived in the far West," said the officer. "He knew more of that country and all things within its borders than any one who ever lived. . . . Although Bridger had little or no education he could with a piece of charcoal or a stick scratch on the ground or any smooth surface a map of the whole western country that was much more correct than those made at that time by skilled topographical engineers, with all their scientific instruments. I have seen Bridger look at a printed map and point out its defects at sight. His experience in that country was not confined to a few nations and tribes of Indians. He knew more about them, their habits, customs and characters than any man who ever lived in all that nation.

"On no occasion would he trust an Indian. His disgust for them knew no bounds. He called them 'sarpints,' 'varmints,' and 'pizen.' He maintained that a rattlesnake was of some good, but that an Indian was good for nothing. He prided himself on the fact that in anything the 'sarpints' (meaning the Indians, not the rattlesnakes) did, he (Bridger) could outdo them. He was a marvelous trailer—unquestionably the most expert that ever lived. Even when old, and with dimmed eyesight he could run a trail when mounted, as fast as his horse could carry him.

"The trappers when trapping, as a rule, took but little notice of the water courses, canyons, foothills or mountains. Bridger on the other hand was careful to note the lay of all these, and this habit of keen observation and the knowledge it brought subsequently served him well when guiding expeditions through the pathless western wilds. He noticed every feature of the country, especially its configuration, and possessing as he did a retentive memory, he could invariably recall all landmarks with unerring accuracy, even though he had not seen them for years.

"His wonderful memory and natural abilities served him so well that he was much respected by army officers and by the authorities at Washington, as well as by all whites with whom he came in contact. The Indians also learned to respect and fear him. When an important military expedition was planned, Bridger's services were secured whenever possible. The most important man on these



Banger's Ferry, North Platte River, Wyoming, just below Orin Junction. A profitable enterprise during spring floodwaters, owned for some years by Bridger. (18)

campaigns was the guide, for on him everything depended, even the very existence of the command. Should he lead into ambush, or where there was no water or fuel, the command might perish. The majority of the guides in the country at that time, were brave and in the front when marching until Indians were sighted or the trail became very pronounced when they were somehow generally found in the rear. Not so with Bridger. He was always at the front. It was necessary at all times for the guide to be acquainted with and on the lookout for traps laid by wily savages, and to know how to guard against them to prevent the troops from being outgeneraled. While Bridger had ample precaution he had the courage of a lion. In that country in opposing the cunning savage, an army of deer led by a lion was worth more than an army of lions led by a deer, and Bridger was the leader. . . .

"The government appreciated his services so highly that he frequently received \$25 per day, his rations, horse, arms and quarters, while in its service. It was Bridger who first brought Kit Carson to the notice of Gen. John C. Fremont, who made Carson famous. I have seen Carson take his orders and instructions from Bridger as a soldier does from his commanding officer. Some of the most skillful guides and famous mountaineers in the western country were trained by Bridger."

Bridger is reported to have been seen at a ferry on Green River in April, but he¹⁹ was employed by a party of Montana gold seeking emigrants a little later in the spring of 1864. The Bozeman route, so called, into the newly discovered country, led northwest from the overland road some distance west of Fort Laramie, crossing the Powder River above Pumpkin Buttes, and skirting the Big Horn mountains on the northeast. But Bridger proceeded with his train by a route to the west of the Big Horn mountains, down the valley of the Big Horn and of Clark's Fork.

Bridger thought the northeastern route too much exposed to hostile Indians, and beset with too many physical difficulties. Thus a rivalry was engendered between his train and that of John M. Bozeman starting a little later that spring. Bozeman had blazed the way over his route the previous season, breaking the way with wagons, while Bridger's route was through virgin lands all the way. However, the two trains arrived at Virginia City almost together. Eventually, Bozeman led other trains over his

route, making that the official route, on which Forts Reno and Phil Kearny were established.

"Bozeman traversed what has since been known as the Bozeman Pass, into the Gallatin valley," says Mr. Wheeler (76), "and Bridger entered the valley via Bridger Creek. The route and pass which Bozeman followed were those used by Captain William Clark in 1806 (pointed out as the right path by Sacajawea, the Shoshone Indian woman guide), and it became a well known thoroughfare, following particularly the old Indian and buffalo road, and it was in constant use until the construction of the Northern Pacific railroad supplanted it.

"The entrances to the valley used by these frontiersmen are within a few miles of each other, the one used by Bridger being to the north of the other. The names of both these men are perpetuated by Bridger Creek, Bridger Mountains, Bridger Pass, and Bridger Peak; and by Bozeman Pass, Bozeman Creek, and the city of Bozeman, all in and about Gallatin valley. Bozeman Pass, which should have been called Sacajawea Pass, is supposed to be the one by which John Colter made his way across the mountains to Lisa's Fort on the Big Horn River after he escaped from the Blackeet at the time Potts was killed."

Returning to Fort Laramie promptly after terminating his contract with the emigrants, Bridger was re-employed on August 18, 1864, by Lieut. H. E. Averill, acting assistant quartermaster, as guide at \$5 a day. He was discharged thirteen days later, August 31, 1864, this employment having probably been in connection with a sortie against the Sioux.

Bridger is reported to have been seen at Green River a couple of weeks later, where he was supposed to have had some ferry interests.¹⁹ But he evidently returned to the farm at Little Santa Fe early in the winter. There Maj.-Gen. Grenville M. Dodge, commanding the military department of the Missouri and Kansas combined, called him as principal guide and chief of scouts on the plains in January, 1865.

CHAPTER LII

CHIEF GUIDE FOR POWDER RIVER EXPEDITION

SWIFTLY was the kaleidoscope of affairs in the West turning and tumbling relentlessly on its way; while with unerring step, though with an increasing weight of years, James Bridger maintained his appropriate position in the surging turmoil of events. Merely growing pains, so-called, were the events which marked the passing of the fur trade, and the coming of the emigrant swarms; but the violent labor pains now being suffered on every hand were the premonitory symptoms of the ten years of travail which finally resulted in the birth of an Indian peace on earth, and good will toward the wronged red men.

Bridger had little to lose and much to gain as the fur trade perished and the wild game disappeared before the oncoming hosts of whites. But as the settlers flung their vanguard far out onto the plains, and rooted themselves permanently; and as the frantic but formidable hordes of mining prospectors fled into the Black Hills, Cherry Creek, Virginia City and other Rocky Mountain gold discoveries, the Indians saw with uncontrolled rage the passing of their game, of their home lands, and of their own existence!

Thus like wild beasts at bay; yes, verily like civilized white men, cornered and forced onto their last resources by overwhelming forces, the hapless red men found themselves banded and bound together in the one greatest of all causes, which is that of self preservation. And their one common aim was to halt the engulfing tide of white men, and raise the Indian banners in a hundred primitive tongues: "They shall not pass!"

Armed troops had been gathered along the Overland mail route, and armed escorts had been provided for most of the emigrant trains, especially those bound for the more dangerous regions. But these efforts were

futile, for they were made against a cause which the Indians believed to be just. By spring, therefore, in the year of 1865, the emigrants and troops had been driven from the branch trails nearly everywhere, and even the Overland stage and telegraph lines, the great thoroughfare to the Pacific, was suffering an enforced idleness in the grasp of the Indians.

Practically every Indian tribe between Texas and the Yellowstone River, and between Utah and the Missouri River, were on the warpath, having reached a concentration of effort along the Overland route (88). The soldiery guarding the route had been whipped into the stockades and corrals at the trading posts and stage stations, and a set of unscrupulous Indian traders was working untold havoc by bartering arms, ammunition and supplies to the hostiles. Thus there were scores of emigrant and supply trains held up awaiting the success of the military arm of the government in wresting control from the Indians.

James Bridger headed a swarm of scouts, guides and interpreters westward from the Missouri that spring at the behest of General Dodge, to investigate and report every detail of Indian presence and activity; while every available body of troops was concentrated from every quarter to the great Overland thoroughfare. Severe weather for several weeks favored the Indians, but the scouts and the troops were more crafty, determined and powerful than ever before, and the telegraph and stage line operators found little enduring difficulty in complying with their instructions to proceed with the traffic. General Dodge had ordered the troops to pursue attack and whip every group of Indians seen or heard of and the result was, that within three months the traffic jam on the Overland moved out like a great ice blockade in the spring, though the route was splattered with blood from scores of skirmishes and frequent bitter Indian fights.

"Long Eyes," as the Indians called General Dodge, from his use of a surveying instrument, then sent punitive expeditions south, west and north, particularly toward Montana, to teach the marauders a lesson in modern warfare. But he was not to succeed; and his plaint was often

repeated that both he and the government had gained the respect of the Indians by aggressive and efficient fighting, though later, when congressional soft heartedness toward the Indian caused the withdrawal of all fighting troops, the red men became emboldened and insolent, so that ten years later a much more costly fight was necessary to do what General Dodge had almost done, in his opinion, in 1865.

In May, 1865, Bridger guided an expedition under Col. Thomas Moonlight, from Fort Laramie, to chastise the Indians on Wind River. Coutant (18) gives the following brief report of the journey.

"Col. Thomas Moonlight, who had been placed in command of Fort Laramie, organized an expedition on May 3 (1865) for the Wind River country on receipt of the information that three hundred Cheyenne lodges were concentrated in the Wind River valley. Colonel Moonlight had under him five hundred cavalry. . . . The command marched by night, the moon being favorable, and on the 12th they reached the vicinity of Wind River, from which points scouts were sent out in every direction and brought back information that the hostiles had made a circuit, going as far south as the Sweetwater mountains, and from there had turned north toward the Powder River country. The command suffered greatly from the cold, as they had encountered a heavy fall of snow and consequently were unable to procure feed for their horses.

"The expedition returned by way of Platte Bridge, having accomplished nothing. Colonel Moonlight in his report said that his command had traveled four hundred and fifty miles, and the Indian scouts must have kept watch of them, for no sooner had they returned to Fort Laramie than their war parties were harassing the (mail) stations at all points. Jim Bridger was the guide for this expedition." "May 14, 1865. Bridger, the old pioneer, and guide, took supper with us," says Serg. I. B. Pennick (40) in a journal entry in camp two miles east of Independence Rock. "His life has been a romantic one in this country since he was eighteen years old, when he came

here. He has been roaming and tramping for forty-two years. General Moonlight took supper with us."

In June Bridger may have journeyed to Montana as guide for N. P. Langford, as mentioned previously (87), though this is not certain.

The War Department files show that Bridger was again engaged, on July 6, 1865, at Fort Laramie, by Capt. S. D. Childs, assistant quartermaster, as chief guide for the Powder River expedition. For this special assignment, caring for an exceptionally large number of troops, and having several guides under him, he was to receive \$10 per day. He was reported as actually employed by the command of Maj.-Gen. Frank Wheaton, though a number of writers give us the information that he served as guide for the entire command.

The Powder River Indian expedition was ordered by Gen. Grenville M. Dodge, Gen. Patrick E. Connor, later conspicuous in Utah history, being given direct command of the expedition. The expedition was in three units, originating in different places, Col. Nelson Cole leaving Omaha, and Col. Samuel Walker departing from Fort Laramie to cover the middle ground. General Connor left Fort Laramie with his command on July 30, 1865, nearly a month after Bridger's employment as chief guide for the expedition at \$10 a day.

General Connor's command consisted of about four hundred and eighty soldiers, seventy-five Pawnee Indian scouts, and seventy Winnebago and Omaha Indians, and six companies of cavalry of about two hundred and fifty men. There were in addition, following the troops, about one hundred and ninety-five teamsters and wagonmasters, in charge of one hundred and eighty-five supply wagons. The guides, under Bridger, were Nick Janisse, Jim Daugherty, Mich. Bouyer, John Resha, Antwine LeDue, and Bordeaux. Capt. J. Lee Humfreville was also on the roster.

General Dodge had found the Powder River Indian campaign necessary to stop the Indian outrages on the Bozeman trail, a route which James Bridger had condemned in the beginning, believing as he did that it was

an affront to the Indians, since it was through the heart of their choicest lands. The Indians had become enraged at the constant movement of emigrants over the route, exactly as Bridger had foreseen, when he selected his route west of the Big Horn mountains in the race with John M. Bozeman for Virginia City.

At the old La Bonte ford over the Platte, about thirty-five miles below Fort Fetterman, where the Bozeman trail left the Platte road, the river was found to be in flood, and the guides were nonplussed. General Connor was greatly irritated at their failure to find a crossing, denouncing them on general principles at the start. But Capt. H. E. Palmer, whose journal (96) is the only official document in existence covering this expedition, relates that by chance he found a buffalo crossing at which the train was crossed on August 2, relieving the censure on the unlucky guides, the chief of whom was a close friend of Captain Palmer's.

The troops and Indian scouts were spread out over the country in a wide swath to avoid surprises as Connor's command departed from the Platte in the unroaded region east of the Bozeman trail. The guides were mostly kept ahead on the lookout for Indian sign, several strong indications being reported by them that war parties were abroad. "Our guides advise us that in the future our camps will be at springs and that we will undoubtedly suffer from thirst before we reach Powder River," Palmer says. Much difficulty was encountered with the wagons, multiple teaming being found necessary frequently. General Connor personally superintended every movement, to assure the success of the campaign.

Pumpkin Buttes were sighted on August 5, which the guides reported were thirty miles from Powder River. Grass fires accidentally started by some soldiers worried the guides somewhat, as they declared it was an Indian signal for a congregating of the red men in great numbers. Palmer comments on the plethora of buffalo and antelope, which provided much fresh meat. The guides pointed out the Big Horn mountains on the 9th, about eighty-five miles ahead. Powder River was reached on

August 11, where fresh sign showed a recent occupation by a large number of Indians. General Connor, part of his staff, and the whites went down the river a short distance to reconnoiter, and "found a 'good Indian' very lately sewed up in a buffalo skin and hung up in a tree." Scouting upstream later as far as the crossing of the Bozeman trail much Indian sign was found and "numerous Indian burial trees were found with lots of 'good Indians' tied up in them."

Timber cutting began on August 14 for the stockade for Fort Connor (soon to be renamed Fort Reno), which General Connor decided to establish where the Bozeman trail thereafter crossed Powder River. The stockade timbers were cut twelve feet long and from eight to ten inches in diameter, and were set four feet in the ground in a trench.

The Pawnee Indian scouts discovered a war party on August 16, and with the soldiers gave them a running fight out of Fort Connor while waiting for the arrival of the wagon train. The Pawnees, traditional enemies of the Sioux, dashed furiously after them, stripping themselves half naked of all impedimenta on the gallop. The Sioux were outnumbered, and the Pawnees returned with about twenty-four scalps and twenty-four horses, in about twenty-four hours from camp. Captain Palmer gives a good description of their hilarity.

"On their return to camp they exhibited the most savage signs of delight, and if they felt fatigued did not show it; rode with the bloody scalps tied to the end of sticks, whooping and yelling like so many devils. In the evening they had a war dance instead of retiring to rest, although they had been up more than thirty hours. The war dance was the most savage scene I had ever witnessed. They formed a circle and danced around a fire, holding up the bloody scalps, brandishing their hatchets and exhibiting the spoils of the fight. They were perfectly frantic with this, their first grand victory over their hereditary foe. During the war dance they kept howling, 'hoo yah, hoo yah,' accompanying their voices with music (if such it could be called) made by beating upon an instrument somewhat resembling a drum. No one who has never witnessed a genuine Indian war dance could form any conception as to its hideousness—the infernal 'hoo yah' and din-din of the tom-tom.

"These howling devils kept up the dance, first, much to our amusement until long after midnight, when finally the general becoming thoroughly disgusted, insisted upon the officer of the day stopping the noise. After considerable talk Captain North, their commander, succeeded in quieting them, and the camp laid down to rest; but this war dance was kept up every night until the next fight, limited however, to 10 o'clock p. m."

Another Sioux chase on the 19th netted one scalp and six horses, though scouting parties sighted from five hundred to a thousand hostile warriors. Three more scalps and eleven horses were brought in on the 20th.

Leaving the larger part of the cavalry at Fort Connor the command departed for the north on August 22. They camped that evening on Crazy Woman Fork "so named because of the fact that some fifteen years before a poor, demented squaw lived near the bank of the river in a wickiup, and finally died there," the scouts evidently told Captain Palmer. On the 23d the party marched into the Bozeman trail at the foot of the Big Horn Mountains. "Several bands of buffalo had been feeding close to camp, and about 5 o'clock p. m. about twenty-five cavalymen rode out and surrounded a band and drove them into a corral formed of our wagons, and there fifteen were slaughtered and turned over to the commissary department."

"The general and a few of his staff officers, myself included, went up the stream to a high mesa some three miles above camp, and got a beautiful view of the country and the surrounding hills, when we ran upon a monstrous grizzly, who took shelter in a little plum patch covering about an acre of ground. One of our party, Trainmaster Wheeling, with more daring than the rest of us cared to exhibit, rode up within a few rods of the patch. The bear would rush out after him, when he would turn with his mule so quickly that the bear could not catch him, the bear close to his heels snapping and growling, at the same time receiving the fire of our Sharpe's rifles. After receiving same, Mr. Grizzly would retire, and again Wheeling would draw him out of the plum patch, and again we would pour cold lead into his carcass. The fight was intensely interesting. When we downed Grizzly we found we had perforated his hide with twenty-three balls. The animal was one of the largest of its species; according to the very best estimate it weighed about eighteen hundred pounds."

Coal Creek, with much coal exposed by washing at that point, was crossed on August 25, and "Seven miles from Clear Fork we came to a very pretty lake about two miles long and about three-fourths of a mile wide, which Major Bridger told us was De Smedt Lake, named after Father De Smedt. The lake is strongly impregnated with alkali, in fact so strong than an egg or potato will not sink if thrown into the water. . . . Not many miles from this

lake is a flowing oil well. A scheme might be inaugurated to tunnel under this lake, pump the oil into the lake, set the tunnel on fire and boil the whole body of alkali water and oil into soap."

That evening in camp on Piney Fork "a large band of buffalo that had been aroused by our flankers came charging down the hill directly into our camp. Many of them turned aside, but several passed through among the wagons, much to the dismay of our animals, most of which were tied to the same, taking their evening meal of grain. One monstrous bull got tangled in the ropes of one of our tents and was killed while trampling it in the dust."

Leaving Piney Fork on the 26th, the dividing ridge between Powder and Tongue rivers was reached at 8 a. m. "I was riding in the extreme advance in company with Major Bridge," the captain informs us. "We were two thousand yards at least ahead of the general and his staff; our Pawnee scouts were on each flank, and a little in advance; at that time there was no advance guard immediately in front. As the major and myself reached the top of the hill, we involuntarily halted our steeds; I raised my field glasses to my eyes and took in the grandest view that I had ever seen. I could see the north end of the Big Horn range, and away beyond, the faint outline of the mountains beyond the Yellowstone. Away to the northeast the Wolf River range was distinctly visible. Immediately before us lay the valley of Peno Creek, now called Prairie Dog Creek, and beyond, the Tongue River valley and many other tributary streams. It was as pretty a picture as I had ever seen. The morning was clear and bright, not a breath of air stirring."

"The old major, sitting upon his horse with his eyes shaded with his hands, had been telling me for an hour or more about his Indian life—his forty years experience on the plains—telling me how to trail Indians and distinguish their tracks from those of different tribes—a subject that I had discussed with him nearly every day. In fact, the major and myself were close friends. His family lived at Westport, Missouri. His daughter, Miss Jennie, had married a personal friend of mine, Lieutenant Wiseman,²⁸ and during the winter of 1863 I had contributed to help Mrs. Bridger and the rest of the family, all of which the major had been acquainted with, which induced him to treat me as an old time friend.

"As I lowered my glass the major said: 'Do you see those ere columns of smoke over yonder?' I replied: 'Where, major?' To which he answered: 'Over by that saddle,' meaning a depression in the hills not unlike the shape of a saddle, pointing at the same time to a point fully fifty miles away. I again raised my glass to my eyes and took a long, earnest look, and for the life

28. Obviously this reference is to Virginia Wachsman.

of me could not see any columns of smoke even with a strong field glass. The major was looking without any artificial help. The atmosphere appeared to be slightly hazy in the long distance like smoke, but there were no distinct columns of smoke in sight. Yet, knowing the peculiarities of my frontier friend, I agreed with him that there were columns of smoke, and suggested that we had better get off our animals and let them feed until the general came up. This we did, and as soon as the general with his staff arrived I called his attention to Major Bridger's discovery. The general raised his field glass and scanned the horizon closely. After a long look he remarked that there were no columns of smoke to be seen.

"The major quietly mounted his horse and rode on. I asked the general to look again, that the major was very confident that he could see columns of smoke, which, of course indicated an Indian village. The general made another examination and again asserted that there were no columns of smoke. However, to satisfy curiosity, and to give our guides no chance to claim that they had shown us an Indian village and we would not attack it, he suggested to Capt. Frank North, who was riding with the staff, that he go with seven of his Indians in the direction indicated to reconnoiter and to report to us on Peno Creek, or Tongue River, down which we were to march.

"I galloped on and overtook the major, and as I came up to him overheard him remark about 'these damn paper collar soldiers' telling him there were no columns of smoke. The old man was very indignant at our doubting his ability to outsee us, with the aid of field glasses even. The joke was too good to keep, and I had to report it to the general. In fact, I don't believe the major saw any columns of smoke, although it afterwards transpired that there was an Indian village in the immediate locality designated. Bridger understood well enough that that was a favorite locality for Indians to camp, and that at most any time there could be found a village there. Hence this declaration that he saw columns of smoke. Our march down Peno Creek was uneventful, the road being very good, much better than we had before found. Our camp that night was in a valley of Peno Creek, not far from Tongue River, sixteen miles from Big Piney."

Captain Palmer may explain the smoke away, but had he known what to look for he might have discerned just what Bridger did: a denser mass of haze in the pocket of the mountains, indicating the morning campfire smoke cloud and not necessarily standing columns of smoke from individual fires. After the encampment was placed on Tongue River on August 28, "four of the Omaha (Indian) scouts went out a short distance from the camp and met a grizzly which they very imprudently fired upon. The grizzly closed upon them, killing one of the scouts and fearfully mangling two others

before a relief party of the same company could drive away the bear. Just after sunset of this day two of the Pawnees who went out with Captain North toward Bridger's columns of smoke two days previous, came into camp with the information that Captain North had discovered an Indian village. The general immediately called me to his tent and instructed me to take command of the camp, keeping the wagons in the corral, protect the stock and hold the position until he should return—that he was going out to fight the Indians."

"I had never been baptized with Indian blood, had never taken a scalp, and now to see the glorious opportunity pass was too much. So, with tears in my eyes I begged of the general to allow Lieutenant Brewer, of the Seventh Iowa Cavalry, whom I knew had just reported to me as very sick, to remain with the train and that I be allowed to accompany him in the glorious work of annihilating the savages. The general granted my request. The men were hurried to eat their supper, just then being prepared, and at 8 o'clock p. m. we left camp with two hundred and fifty white men and eighty Indian scouts as the full attacking force." Of course Bridger was also with the party, in quest of the Indians whose smoke he had seen.

"From our calculation as to distance we expected to strike the village at daylight on the morning of the 29th. Our line of march lay up the valley of the Tongue River, and after we had passed the point where our wagons had struck the stream, we found no road, but much underbrush and fallen timber, and as the night was quite dark, our march was greatly impeded, so that at daylight we were not within many miles of the Indian village. The general was much disappointed at this delay which compelled us to keep closely under cover and in many instances to march along the water's edge under the river bank in single file, to keep out of sight of the Indians. I had worked my self to the extreme advance, and like possibly many others in the command, had begun to think that there was no Indian village near us, and that we would have no Indians to fight. Arriving at this conclusion I had become somewhat reckless and had determined that Captain North, who had joined our command soon after we left camp, should not reach the Indian village in advance of myself.

"As we rode along close together conversing, I managed to forge in ahead of him just as we dropped down into a deep ravine; the bank on the side just beyond the stream was much higher than the bank from which we came, and the trail led up this steep bank. As I rode up the bank and came to the top my eyes beheld a sight as unexpected to me as a peep into Sheol. Just before me lay a large mesa or table containing five or six hundred acres of land, all covered with Indian ponies, except a portion about one-half mile to the left, which was thickly dotted with Indian tepees full

of Indians. Without a moment's hesitation I grasped the bits of my horse with my right hand and his nostrils with my left to prevent him from whinnying, threw myself from the saddle, dragging the horse down the bank against Captain North's horse, and whispered to him that we had found the village. Captain North held my horse while I ran back motioning the men to keep still. In fact the general had issued orders when we left camp that no man should speak above a whisper and that when the horses attempted to whinney they should be jerked up with a tight rein.

"During the last one-half hour of our march several men had become somewhat careless, and were not as cautious as they had been during the night. I soon met the general, who was close to the advance, and told him of my discovery. The word was passed back for the men to close up and to follow the general and not fire a shot until he fired in advance. General Connor then took the lead; rode his horse up the steep bank of the ravine and dashed out across the mesa as if there were no Indians just to the left. Every man followed as closely as possible. At the first sight of the general the ponies covering the tableland in front of us set up a tremendous whinneying and galloped down toward the Indian village. More than a thousand dogs commenced barking and more than seven hundred Indians made the hills ring with their fearful yelling.

"It appeared that the Indians were in the act of breaking camp. The ponies, more than three thousand, had been gathered in and most of the warriors had secured their horses; probably half of the squaws and children were mounted, and some had taken up the line of march up the stream for a new camp. They were Arapahoes under Black Bear and Old David, with several other chiefs not so prominent. The general watched the movements of his men until he saw the last man emerge from the ravine, when he wheeled on the left into line. The whole line then fired a volley from their carbines into the village without halting their horses, and the bugle sounded the charge. Without the sound of the bugle there would have been no halt by the men in that column; not a man but realized that to charge into the Indian village without a moment's hesitancy was our only salvation. We already saw that we were greatly outnumbered, and that only desperate fighting would save our scalps. I felt for a moment that my place was with the train; that really I was a consummate fool for urging the general to allow me to accompany him. I was reminded that I had lost no Indians, and that scalping Indians was unmanly, besides being brutal, and for my part I did not want any dirty scalps; yet I had no time to halt; I could not do it—my horse carried me forward almost against my will, and in those few moments—less than it takes to tell the story—I was in the village in the midst of a hand to hand fight with warriors and their squaws, for many

of the female portion of this band did as brave fighting as their savage lords.

"Unfortunately for the women and children our men had no time to direct their aim; bullets from both sides and murderous arrows filled the air; squaws and children as well as warriors fell among the dead and wounded. The scene was indescribable. There was not much of the military in our movements; each man seemed an army by himself. Standing near the 'Sweat-house' I emptied my revolver into the carcasses of three warriors. One of our men, a member of the Eleventh Ohio Cavalry, formerly one of John Morgan's men, a fine looking soldier with as handsome a face as I ever saw on a man, grabbed me by the shoulder and turned me about that I might assist him in withdrawing an arrow from his mouth. The point of the arrow had passed through his open mouth and lodged in the root of his tongue. Having no surgeon with us of a higher rank than a hospital steward, it was afterwards, within a half hour, decided that to get the arrow out of his mouth the tongue must be, and was, cut out. The poor fellow returned to camp with us and at this late date I am unable to say whether he lived or died. Another man, a sergeant in the Signal Corps, by the name of Charles M. Latham, was shot in the heel. He had been through the entire war in the army of the Potomac, and wore a medal for his bravery; had passed through many battles, and escaped unharmed. This shot in the heel caused his death; he died a few days afterward with lockjaw.

"The Indians made a brave stand trying to save their families, and succeeded in getting away with a large majority of their women and children, leaving behind them nearly all of their plunder. They fled up a stream now called Wolf Creek, General Connor in close pursuit. Soon after we left the village General Connor advised me to instruct Captain North to take his Indians and get all the stock he could possibly gather. This was done, and with a few stragglers I followed a small band of Indians up the main Tongue River about three miles until they became strong enough to turn upon us and force us back. General Connor pursued the fleeing savages fully ten miles from camp when he found himself accompanied by only fourteen men; our horses had all become so fatigued and worn out that it was impossible to keep up. The general halted his small squad and attempted to take the names of his brave comrades, when the Indians, noticing the paucity of his numbers, immediately turned upon him and made a desperate effort to surround him and his small squad of soldiers. They fell back as rapidly as possible, contesting every inch, reinforced every few moments by some stragglers who had endeavored to keep up. With this help they managed to return to camp, where Captain North and myself had succeeded in corraling about eleven hundred head of ponies.

"One piece of artillery had become disabled. The axletree of the gun-carriage, a mountain howitzer, was broken. We left the wheels and broken axle near the river and saved the cannon. The command rendezvoused in the village and the men were set to work destroying Indian property. Scores of buffalo robes, blankets and furs were heaped up on lodge poles, with tepee and dried buffalo meat piled on top and burned. On one of these piles we placed our dead and burned their bodies to keep the Indians from mutilating them. During our halt the Indians pressed up close to the camp, made several desperate attempts to recover their stock, when the mountain howitzer, under the skillful management of Nick O'Brien, prevented them from completing their aims. Our attack upon the village commenced at 9 o'clock a. m. The rendezvous in the village was about half-past twelve; we remained there until half-past two; in the intervening time we destroyed an immense amount of Indian property—fully two hundred and fifty Indian lodges and contents. At half-past two we took up the line of march for the train. Captain North with his eighty Indians, undertook to drive the stock; they were soon far ahead, while the rest of the force were employed in beating back Indians. The Indians pressed us on every side, sometimes charging up to within fifty feet of our rear guard. They seemed to have plenty of ammunition, but did most of their fighting with arrows, although there were some of them armed with muskets with which they could send lead in dangerous proximity to our men.

"Before dark we were reduced to forty men who had any ammunition, and these only a few rounds apiece. The Indians showed no signs of stopping the fight, but kept on pressing us, charging upon us, dashing away at the stock, keeping us constantly on the move, until 15 minutes of 12 o'clock, when the last shot was fired by our pursuers. At this time I had gone ahead to communicate an order from General Connor to Captain North relative to handling the stock. Having completed my work, I halted by the side of the trail and waited for the general, who was with the rear guard. I remember as I was getting from my horse I heard the last shot fired some two or three miles in the rear. After I had dismounted I realized that I was fearfully tired, so tired that I could not stand up. I sat upon the ground and in a moment in spite of myself, was in a sound sleep, and was only awakened by being dragged by my horse, which was an Indian pony that I had saddled from the captured stock. Nearly all our men had remounted themselves while we were rendezvousing in the Indian village, otherwise we would not have been able to keep out of the way of the pursuing Indians. My lariat was wrapped around my right arm, and with this the pony was dragging me across the prickly pears when I awakened. Realizing that I was on dangerous ground, I quickly mounted my pony and listened for the least sound

to indicate whether the general had come up or not. There was no noise—not a sound to be heard, the night was intensely dark, and myself so bewildered that I scarcely knew which way to go. Again jumping from my horse I felt with my hands until I found the trail and discovered that the footprints of the horses went in a certain direction. Taking that as my course, I rode away as rapidly as possible and after three miles hard riding overtook the general and his rear guard who had passed me while asleep. All congratulated me on my narrow escape.

"We arrived at camp at daylight after marching fully one hundred and ten miles without any rest or refreshments, except the jerked buffalo that the boys had filled their pockets with in the Indian village. The incidents of this fight would make interesting reading. Many acts of personal bravery cannot be recorded. Suffice it to say that every man was a general. Not a command was given by the general after the first order to charge—not a man in the command but realized that his life was in the balance. We must either whip the Indians, and whip them badly, or be whipped ourselves. We could see that the Indians greatly outnumbered us; that our main dependence was upon our superior equipment; we were better armed than they. As for fighting qualities, the savages proved themselves as brave as any of our men. The fight commenced at 9 o'clock, was offensive until about 11 a. m. when the general was driven back into camp with his small squad of men; from that time until midnight we fought on the defensive. Yet we had accomplished a grand victory. Two hundred and fifty lodges had been burned with the entire winter's supply of the entire Arapahoe band. The son of the principal chief (Black Bear) was killed, sixty-three warriors were slain, and about eleven hundred head of ponies were captured. While we were in the village destroying the plunder, most of our men were busy remounting. Our own tired stock was turned into the herd and the Indian ponies were lassoed and mounted; this maneuver afforded the boys no little fun, as in nearly every instance the rider was thrown or else badly shaken up by the bucking ponies. The ponies appeared to be as afraid of the white men as our horses were afraid of the savages. If it had not been for Captain North with his Indians, it would have been impossible for us to take away the captive stock, as they were constantly breaking away from us trying to return toward the Indians, who were as constantly dashing toward the herd in vain hope of recapturing their stock.

"Many exciting scenes were witnessed upon the field of battle. During the chase up Wolf Creek with the general one of North's braves picked up a little Indian boy that had been dropped by the wayside. The little fellow was crying, but when picked up by the soldier Indian fought like a wild cat. One of our men asked the Indian what he was going to do with the papoose. He said,

'Don't know; kill him, mebbby.' He was told to put him down and not injure the bright little fellow. The Indian obeyed, and at least one papoose owed his life to a kind hearted soldier. Several of our men were wounded, some of them quite severely. Three or four afterwards died of their wounds. Two of our soldiers, white men, I forget their names, were found among the dead, and three or four of the North Indians were killed. . . . We brought back to camp with us eight squaws and thirteen Indian children, who were turned loose a day or two afterward."

A couple of days after the Arapahoe fight Captain Palmer reports that several 'medicine wolves' were heard to howl about camp in the night. "Ever since we left Fort Laramie our camp has been surrounded with thousands of wolves that made the night hideous with their infernal howling; but not until tonight have we heard the 'medicine wolf' which Old Bridger claims to be a supernatural sort of an animal, whose howling is sure to bring trouble to camp. Bridger, Nick Janisse, and Rulo, being very superstitious, were so frightened at this peculiar howling that they took up their blankets and struck out for a new camp, which according to their theory, was the only way of escaping from the impending danger; they went down the river about half a mile and camped in the timber by themselves."

CHAPTER LIII

CHIEF GUIDE FOR POWDER RIVER EXPEDITION (Concluded)

THE stunning news was received on September 4 that Colonel Sawyer's train of road builders on the Bozeman route had been attacked, presumably by the Indians that Connor's command had fought; that a captain and two men had been killed; and that the train was forced into a corral and a siege was then on. Reinforcements were dispatched to the scene forty miles distant, but when this assistance arrived the Indians had desisted.

On September 6, scouting parties having pushed to the mouth of Tongue River and returned, the command about-faced, marching up Tongue River. On the 8th Captain Humfreville and part of his company was ordered to the Rosebud River, and other scouting parties kept the country beat up generally for Indian sign. Captain Humfreville returned on the 11th, reporting that no sign had been obtained of Col. Nelson Cole, who had been expected to join Connor on Tongue River several days previously.

"Connor, hearing nothing from Cole, sent out Major Frank North with a couple of Indian scouts, and with Bridger as guide (88)," writes General Dodge. "They got over into the Powder River country and discovered Cole's trail. During Cole's retreat up the Powder there came a fearful snowstorm. The animals, having marched so far without grain, were already very much exhausted, and the storm lasting three days, they became so weak that they were not fit to use, and they were therefore shot (five or six hundred of them), just as they stood at the picket line, to prevent them from falling into the Indian's hands. This destruction of the animals and the burning of all their equipment (including saddles) was about the first thing that Major North struck, and, of course, he experienced a great anxiety, fearing that Cole had met with great disaster, and immediately

reported to General Connor, who at once sent Serg. C. L. Thomas with two Pawnees with dispatches to Colonel Cole to march on up Powder River to Fort Connor (Reno) where he would find supplies."

This startling news of Colonel Cole's defeat had a most depressing effect on General Connor's men, for of the latter there were but about four hundred while Colonel Cole had four times as many. It was known that the latter were also out of provisions, and that they must be retreating on foot, having apparently been compelled to abandon their stock, killing it to prevent its falling into the hands of the Indians. Scouting parties brought the intelligence that around five or six thousand Cheyennes and Sioux Indians were or had been in pursuit of Colonel Cole's command. The disheartening assumption was that they might at any time turn their attention to General Connor's little command. The safety of the latter was admittedly in the hands of the guides, particularly the chief, Bridger.

On September 17 Connor's command met a scouting party from Colonel Cole's encampment, from whom it was learned that encounters with the Sioux had been frequent, and that many of the horses, emaciated from shortage of forage and water during the hot weather, and further pinched by the sudden turn to cold and stormy weather, had to be killed at their pickets to prevent their falling into the Indians' hands, since they could not carry their riders nor draw their wagons. Colonel Cole had concluded, from the cloud of Indians that stormed about him, that General Connor's command had been wiped out, hence his own retreat toward Fort Laramie.

General Connor's command moved back up Peno Creek, where, on September 22, a detachment from Fort Connor arrived, bringing the dispiriting information that General Connor had been relieved of the command of the District of the Plains. At Fort Connor on the 24th Colonel Cole's men were found to resemble tramps more than soldiers, being ragged and half starved, as well as disgusted and discouraged. They claimed they fought Indians for six days on Powder River, killing three or

four hundred. At Fort Connor Colonel Cole took command of the field forces on September 26, General Connor, who had been succeeded by Gen. Frank Wheaton, and Captain Palmer, proceeding with a small escort to Fort Laramie, and thence to Denver. On the way they turned over to the Fort Laramie commandant six hundred and ten horses, all that had been saved of those taken from the Indians, since they were exceptionally hard to drive.

It was Palmer's opinion that in spite of its apparent failure, the Powder River Indian expedition caused the Indians to fall back on their villages in defense of their families, leaving the Overland and Bozeman routes temporarily safe. "It was not until General Connor retraced his steps, by order of the War Department, back to Laramie, with all the soldiers, that the Indians, thinking he had voluntarily retired from their front again, hastened to the road, passing General Connor's retiring column to the east of his line of march, and again commenced their devilish work of pillage, plunder and massacre."

James Bridger remained with Colonel Cole's command, which proceeded leisurely to Fort Laramie. He remained on the payroll for some time thereafter, being mustered out again on November 30, 1865, by Captain Childs. Captain Humfreville (53) makes a passing comment on the operations of the old plainsman on this expedition, though he was not under the captain's orders or surveillance directly. "When we arrived in the vicinity of Rosebud River," writes Captain Humfreville, "Bridger informed the officers that we were near a large body of Indians, and that they had large numbers of newly stolen animals, giving their numbers. This he did from the marks of the animals' shoes, as the horses and mules of the Indians are never shod. When we entered this battle everything he said was found to be correct."

An interesting story of Bridger's participation in the Powder River Indian Expedition was told by A. J. Shotwell in a reminiscence article appearing in the Freeport, Ohio, *Press*, of May 3, 1916, Shotwell having been a soldier on that expedition, and having previously been assigned to Fort Laramie garrison. Shotwell said that "Bridger was a prince among men, and the uncrowned king

of all the Rocky Mountain scouts. . . . I have often wondered why, in all the writings of life in the great West in the years long gone by, so little mention is made of Bridger."

"My first few weeks at Fort Laramie seemed like a dream, so strange was all around me, and you may well be sure that I took note of all about me. Indians in their blankets of gaudy colors, hunters and trappers in their buckskin suits with beaded shirts and decorated headgear, were all of intense interest to me; and when I could join a group of these trappers or scouts and hear them tell of exploits in mountain wilds, encounters with wolves and bears, and other thrilling incidents in their lives, I would think to myself: what wonderful men are these to survive through the many conflicts narrated.

"But there was another figure that soon claimed my notice. A tall well built man in plain civilian garb with nothing in his makeup to mark him apart from men as they appeared back east. A man who quietly went his way and seemed foreign to all around him, but I noticed that the officers of the post and scouts and hunters all paid him deference. So much did this come under my notice that in time curiosity prompted me to ask who was the strange, quiet man, and imagine if you can, my surprise on being told that this was Bridger, the greatest of scouts in his time. A man who, to use a trite saying, knew the Rocky Mountain country like a book; a man invaluable to the government; a man consulted in all important military movements; in fact, an oracle in all that pertained to the vast country surroundings. This was my first insight into the life of Bridger, and how I longed to know more of him, but somehow this was deferred until after years.

"The company of which I was a member was assigned to duty at Fort Halleck, more than a hundred miles distant from Fort Laramie, and we did not return to headquarters until July, 1865, when we became a part of General Connor's expedition through the Sioux Indian country as far north as the Yellowstone. Great was my satisfaction in learning that Bridger, the quiet man, would be our guide on this occasion, and fortune seemed doubly kind when I found that one of the scouts under Bridger was one of the mess to which I belonged, thinking this would give me a chance to have conversation with the one man I so much desired to get on familiar terms with. We were out on this expedition two months traveling in that time nearly eight hundred miles, and every night Bridger made his camp alone beside our own, so as to be near the scout who met with our little party, and in all that time but few had conversation with him, so prone was he to hold himself aloof. He would cook his frugal meal, and soon as darkness approached, wrap himself in his blankets for the night. But with the first peep of day he was astir, and after a hasty cup of coffee and jerked meat, he would saddle up, and after calling on General Connor, quietly ride away, and we would see no more of him until evening, when he would

ride into camp, and after a short conference with the general in command, find his accustomed place for the night. And so each day was a repetition of the day before.

"By the last of August we had arrived in the Big Horn mountain country and one evening were making camp. The wagon train of ninety wagons had just formed their circular corral and the various messes had started camp fires, when one of the scouts came in, reporting a large Indian camp, he judged forty miles off. Soon Bridger was all animation, and after a hasty consultation, two hundred and fifty good mounts were in the saddle and with General Connor at the head, set out on a night's ride to reach that band of warriors before break of day. I was one of this party and will never forget how we rode through the silent watches of the night with naught to light our way, except the brilliant stars in a cloudless sky, and how that long column of silent men wound through the rocky defiles and over stretches of grassy plains until the way seemed interminable, but all confident in our guide. When the first rays of light heralded the coming of the king of day we suddenly halted, and there, right before us, lay the object of search.

"Orders were whispered and the front filed right and left, and in less time than I tell it, that column of mounted men had formed a vast crescent and were charging pell mell into we knew not what. Pandemonium broke loose and if ever a band of Indian warriors were taken by surprise it was then and there, and all credit was due the quiet man who conducted us safely to our goal. The battle that ensued in the next few hours was fast and furious and cannot enter into this story. Suffice it to say that notwithstanding the Indians were in number three to one, they were completely vanquished and all their lodges destroyed. During this engagement Bridger seemed always to be in the right place at the opportune time."

Quite naturally peace talk was rife early that winter on the plains, both among the red men and the whites. The Indians were very short of supplies, and the government, urged by a powerful portion of the public in sympathy with the mistreated Indians, favored peace at any reasonable price. Thus messengers spread the news over the plains to the representatives of twenty or thirty thousand hostile Indians, announcing the peace meeting for the spring of 1866 at Fort Laramie. Only a few discerning old timers chief among whom was James Bridger, detected the element of ill faith and distrust among the Indians—the willingness for the real Indian leaders like Sitting Bull to allow their sub-chiefs to indulge in the harmless pastime of talking peace, as Coutant (18) phrases it approximately: "Jim Bridger and other mountain men of experience did not feel willing to express the opinion that the Indians were honest in their peace talk. They would wait and see what the savages had to say after grass came."

CHAPTER LIV

OBSERVING THE PEACE CONFERENCE

THE discharge given Bridger on November 30, 1865, was only temporary, and may have been requested by him. Early in December he made a journey to the Missouri River, probably going to the Westport farm. His son Felix had enlisted in the Civil War forces in 1863, and now that the war was ended we may well assume that Bridger had good reason for returning for a visit with his family, even at a sacrifice of his large salary. We know only what Shotwell (69) tells us of this journey to the states. Shotwell, and his comrade at arms, W. H. McFadden, secured a transfer to Ohio, and chanced to travel with Bridger out of Fort Laramie on that occasion.

"On the morning of our starting what was my surprise to find Bridger as a fellow passenger in the mail ambulance that would carry us over the first stage of our journey to Julesburg, one hundred and eighty miles distant where we expected to secure passage to the River on the Overland coach," Shotwell's narrative runs. "We had put our belongings on the mail wagon when Bridger came up, and throwing a bundle aboard asked, 'Where are you boys going?' When told through to the river, he frowned for a moment and then said, 'So am I, and if we travel together, I guess it's best to be sociable.' And here came another surprise—the man who in all the years was so unapproachable soon became one of the most companionable men I ever met, and most entertaining, relating incidents in a life rich in experience."

"Our journey to Julesburg consumed two days and a night, and was fraught with much discomfort owing to our crowded quarters among mail sacks and other baggage, loaded into the limited space of an army ambulance. At Julesburg we were told that no passage could be had on Overland coaches eastbound short of ten days as all space was taken that far ahead. This information was discomfiting but soon a remedy appeared in the shape of a train of twenty-five wagons returning empty from Denver, bound for the Missouri River via Fort Kearney.

"We quickly made terms with the wagonmaster to carry us to Fort Kearney, two hundred miles on our way from which place three

different stage lines run to as many points on the river. We were assigned to a wagon having a large, deep body, with double canvas covers, and buying a lot of hay we cushioned the floor of the wagon box about six inches deep with hay, piled in our blankets and other belongings and got aboard—and for eight days traveled in perfect comfort.

“There were many road houses along the overland road at this time, and knowing it was the custom of freighters to camp near such places we depended upon securing meals at these houses, sleeping in our wagon at night. Our plan of travel met a surprise the first night out, a surprise most agreeable, however. Our wagon train had halted for the night about a hundred yards from one of these caravansaries, and we and our little party had no sooner alighted and were stretching our limbs, than we noticed a man approaching from the house, and as he drew near exclaimed, ‘Of all men who have we here, if not Old Jim Bridger,’ and after further exclamations of greeting and vigorous hand shaking continued by saying, ‘Come right in, Jim; the place is yours as long as you care to stay.’ Bridger replied, ‘Here are two soldier boys traveling with me; I stay with them.’ ‘All the same,’ replied the man, ‘Bridger and his friends included.’ So we all walked in, and soon after were seated at a bountiful meal of the best the place afforded; and places to sleep were provided and a good breakfast followed, and a lunch for the noon hour when we took leave, and not a penny to pay.

“Stories of frontier life filled in the night until the wee small hours. The experience of this first night was repeated every night of our eight days journey from Julesburg to Kearney. Nothing could more vividly show the esteem in which Bridger was held by frontiersmen of that time.

“Before proceeding further allow me to give you an idea of the personal appearance of this remarkable man. Fifty years have passed since the incidents here related were imparted to me, January, 1866. Bridger was at that time fifty-six (62) years of age, well preserved for a man who had passed through many trials and hardships. While I myself am now advanced in years, I still retain in memory, I believe, a very correct picture of Bridger at the time of which I speak. Of well proportioned form, of slender mould, about six feet high, possibly a little less, possibly slightly more, straight as an Indian, muscular and quick in movement, but not nervous or excitable; in weight probably one hundred and sixty pounds; with an eye piercing as the eye of an eagle that seemed to flash fire when narrating an experience that had called out his reserve power. There was nothing in his costume or deportment to indicate the heroic spirit that dwelled within, simply a plain, unassuming man, but made of heroic stuff every inch. What would I not give if I could at this time recall all that was imparted during

eight days travel in the quiet of our snug quarters with the wagon train, for it was here that he unfolded day by day, the story of his life of forty-four years in the great, almost unknown west, dating from the year 1822.

Briefly reviewing Bridger's early mountain experiences as the old scout is presumed to have related them, Shotwell continues: "On one of these excursions he headed north into the British Possessions, and with the north star for a guide, continued on his way down the valley of the Mackenzie River to the Arctic Ocean. Here at the threshold of the polar night he could go no farther, and turning back, made his way safely to his starting place, which he reached after an absence of eighteen months, during which time he had not tasted bread nor looked into the face of a white man." . . .

"Some time during these years, I can't recall the date, Bridger was taken with a longing to see the old home and having an extra large accumulation of pelts, concluded to take charge of the shipment. The most valuable part of the cargo was five thousand beaver skins, which he expected to sell at \$4 each. What was his surprise and gratification on arrival at St. Joe to find beaver in demand at \$7. He easily disposed of his beaver at this figure, totaling \$35,000. This was further augmented \$5,000 by the proceeds from other pelts, putting into his hands \$40,000, a princely sum of money at that time for a young man almost born in the wilderness. His people, still living, were of course overjoyed at the return of the wanderer whom, while heard from at times, they never expected to see again, so hazardous was life in the wild West.

"Bridger himself was pleased with the quiet life and having abundant ready money bought a tract of land, married, and as he supposed, settled down to the quiet life of a farmer. But this was only for a short time. The call of the wilds was not to be hushed and in a few years he was back among his life's familiar scenes, returning at times for short intervals to visit his family, but not remaining long. . . .

"On parting with Bridger at Fort Kearney we reluctantly had to refuse his urgent invitation to accompany him home. Our time was limited and we had calls to make in Iowa on our way east, so after a sad farewell we went our way down the valley of the Platte, to Omaha, meeting the rails of the Union Pacific forty miles west of that city."

Bridger renewed old acquaintances at Fort Kearney, among whom was Col. H. E. Maynadier, stationed at that point, commanding the western sub-district of Nebraska. Colonel Maynadier remembered the valuable service rendered by Bridger on the Reynolds expedition, and knew of his employment under General Connor on the Powder

River Indian expedition. The old scout was thus urged to hurry back from the Missouri River, and take a position as guide for the new troops that were being sent into the Powder River country for permanent occupancy.

He thus did not remain long with his family, but returned in a few weeks, reaching Fort Kearney about January 25, 1866, on which date he was re-employed as chief guide at \$7 a day on Colonel Maynadier's orders, according to the War Department files. Col. Henry B. Carrington was at Fort Kearney outfitting the new Powder River expedition, of which he was the commanding officer. Bridger became "the colonel's confidential guide at all times" (77).

A powerful influence at work in congress, in sympathy with the wronged Indians, kept the army more or less handicapped by unsupported orders and by a withholding of funds necessary to properly execute the orders given. Bridger's salary fell under the sharp edge of the latter axe, and he was "demoted to guide at \$5 a day, March 5, 1866" (54). He was active about Fort Kearney, probably participating in a few minor local expeditions, principally in the interests of Colonel Carrington's expedition, which finally got under way up the Platte on May 19, 1866.

Only two chroniclers give us narratives through which Bridger may be glimpsed occasionally during this, his last important army assignment. Margaret I. Carrington, wife of Col. Henry B. Carrington, and Mrs. Frances C. Grummond, wife of Lieut. George W. Grummond, accompanied their husbands on this expedition, and each kept a journal and published a book. Mrs. Grummond, in later years, became the second wife of Colonel Carrington before publishing her work (77 and 78).

The original Mrs. Carrington, whose book followed very closely her journal as written at the time (78), credits Bridger with valuable assistance in its compilation, in the first paragraph of her prologue. "Gathering many of its details from officers of the posts, from Maj. James Bridger and others, and so gathering as each day's experience unfolded events of interest, there is no assumption of anything further than to express the facts so recorded

just as they were impressed upon the judgment or fancy."

Maj.-Gen. Grenville M. Dodge was then commanding the Department of the Missouri, U. S. Army, and furnished much information, and the only complete maps of the country. He also assisted in selecting and obtaining the machinery necessary, including a steam saw mill mowing machines, shingle and brick machines, together with builders' hardware and house furnishings. Sets of tools for blacksmiths, wheelwrights, painters, harness-makers, carpenters and other artisans, as well as easy chairs, churns, washing machines and other housekeeping equipment were bought, in addition to small flocks of turkeys and chickens, "and one brace of swine."

"The last thing done looked a little warlike," wrote Mrs. Carrington. "The magazine was opened and all the ammunition that could be spared from the fort was drawn out and loaded in wagons; but its comparatively meager supply gave little annoyance, as Laramie would be expected to furnish the deficit in case any further fighting material should be required in the way of powder and lead. Then we had the news that a battalion of the Thirteenth Infantry had been ordered to build a new post at the foot of the northern Black Hills, while two companies were to keep open the road thence to Fort Reno, thus giving fair assurance that the Indians of that location and Powder River valley would be watched and held to their own theater of action, in case the Laramie council should fail to establish Peace on the Plains."

The Carrington caravan, as it marched out of Fort Kearney, and up the historic Platte River Road, consisted of two hundred and twenty-six mule teams, a swarm of horsemen in saddles, and an aggregate of about two hundred and sixty persons, including clerks and band members. Many of the veterans had less than a year to serve, but were entering the Indian country to round out their careers, several of which were terminated with the loss of their scalps. "As chief guide, Maj. James Bridger had been selected," Mrs. Carrington tells us, "assisted by H. Williams, who had been a guide to several expeditions to the Republican during the winter of 1865-1866."

Fort McPherson was passed on May 24, a brief halt being made in quest of ammunition, and to take along a saw mill which was idle at that post. "On the 29th we camped near the old California crossing, and received a call from Colonel Otis and some gentlemen of the Peace Commissions, who, with agreeable presents for the red men, were on their way to the Laramie council. About dark the news was brought that nearly three hundred Indians had crossed the Platte near by for a hunt on the Republican, having permission to be absent from Laramie until other bands came in, and the commission should formally assemble."

Fort Sedgwick, near Julesburg, was reached by Colonel Carrington on May 30, and some time was spent getting a flatboat, just arrived from Denver, in commission as a ferry. Twenty yokes of cattle were used to draw the first cable over, a string of mules having failed to effect the crossing. Rather suddenly, after starting the boat, the river fell a foot or so, and fording became necessary. The loads were reduced in size and numerous teams of mules were attached to each wagon and started across.

While the lead mules were swimming, middle teams were pulling, and wheelers were floundering, and at all times as they progressed, some of the teams had solid footing and could pull or push the other teams forward. Riders had to rope the lead teams and draw them along cowboy style, and much goading was displayed suitable for overcoming the native instincts of the mule. At that several of them got water in their ears, meaning that between the deep water and their stubbornness, they were drowned. Sugar sacks were melted and flour became dough with the addition of Platte River water, while now and then a knapsack or other object floated downstream.

Two days after completing the crossing of the Platte brought them to Louis' ranche, which was even then showing railroad activities. "This very Pacific railroad, with its swift pulse, drives everything along, and its chief engineer, General (Grenville M.) Dodge, seems to attempt the annihilation of time and space, with the same indefatigable spirit as that with which he won the thanks

of everybody at Old Kearney in aiding their efficient outfit for the plains." While Carrington had been on the way thus far, the Union Pacific railroad officials had succeeded in securing General Dodge's release from the army, effective May 1, 1866.

Ranches or roadhouses, many of them with palisade inclosures and all with ample hostelry and corral space, such as it was, were stationed along the road to lighten the traveler's load of cash and to encourage him to increase his load of care by overindulgence; and when inclement weather necessitated, meals and lodging were procurable, when the traveler could tolerate them, according to this woman narrator. In one place, on the divide between Lodge Pole Creek and Mud Springs, where a roadhouse was most desirable, a well had been begun that was twenty feet in diameter and two hundred feet deep, though without reaching water. Between stations the want of water and the hot weather filled the ambulances with the lame and the sunstruck, though ten-minute halts were made each hour. Buffalo chips early replaced wood for fuel, though many messes dragged logs along for wood until the logs gave out.

Court House Rock was reached for an encampment on June 7; and Brown's ranche on the Platte was twelve miles farther the following day, with Chimney Rock five more miles for an encampment, this rock being nearly three hundred and eighty feet high. Fifteen more miles brought Terry's ranche, opposite Fortification Rocks, and then came Scotts Bluffs, the passage of the bluffs being by a tortuous gorge so narrow in places the wagons could not pass except in single file. Fort Mitchell was just outside the bluffs, being a sub-post of Fort Laramie. On June 13 the troops reached an encampment near Jules Coffee's ranche, about four miles east of Fort Laramie, and two sergeants were drowned that evening in the Platte while bathing.

"Just about sunset Standing Elk, a fine specimen of the Brule Sioux . . . called to pay his respects, receive a present of tobacco, and have a talk," says Mrs. Carrington's journal. "He asked us where we were going, and

was very frankly told the destination of the command. He then told us that a treaty was being talked about at Laramie with a great many Indians, some of whom belonged in the country to which we were going; but that the fighting men of those bands had not come in and would not; but that we would have to fight them, as they would not sell their hunting grounds to the white men for a road. . . . Our first interview with the Indians of the Northwest was both the assurance of the friendship of some and the bitter animosity and opposition of many. It was proof that the careful marching, guarding of trains, and precautions against annoyance or intercourse with Indians had been judicious, and was equally suggestive of like prudence as the expedition advanced."

The peace conference was in session when the officers of Colonel Carrington's expedition paid a visit to Fort Laramie that evening. Since the colonel was probably more vitally concerned with the outcome of the parley than any other leader, he had sought to have the meetings delayed until his arrival; and while they were not so delayed, he sought to establish communication with the leaders, especially the leading Indians present, as he would soon be advancing into their lands.

Col. P. St. George Cooke, then at Omaha, had written that "There must be peace"; and while en route Colonel Carrington had carefully avoided collision with hunting, scouting or traveling parties of Indians.

"Our trains were habitually formed in a hollow square, or corral, upon reaching camping grounds," explains Mrs. Carrington, "to insure the safety of stock at night, while pickets and mounted parties carefully guarded all animals on herd as soon as they were turned loose. The strictest discipline was enforced, and nothing was left undone that the energy and ambition of the officers could accomplish to instruct new recruits and prepare them for the labor and possible conflicts that the future might unfold.

"No bartering with Indians was permitted under any circumstances; but all Indians who really wished an interview had the privilege of visiting headquarters, and there received kind attention and some little gifts, like tobacco or old garments, but never arms, powder or whiskey. Our camp near Laramie was therefore located close enough for business, but far enough away to prevent the mingling of the troops and Indians for any purposes—thus avoid-

ing the possibility of collisions growing out of trades in furs, beads and other articles, in which the Indian is generally the unlucky one, and often exhibits his disappointment by becoming revengeful and wicked.

"The next day, June 14, wagons were sent to the fort for one hundred thousand rounds of rifle ammunition, and to perfect the arrangements for supplies for the upper posts to be built in the new district. Unfortunately there happened to be at the fort not a single thousand rounds for infantry arms such as are used in the army; so it was assumed that we should have a happy journey, a happy peace, and a happy future. Twenty-six wagons of additional provisions were ready, with the single drawback that drivers had to be furnished from the command; but this nice economy had the effect, practically, to put that number of soldiers *hors de combat* in case of any trouble requiring soldiers, and thus disposed of some of the best of our men. Major Bridger told us that he had seen kegs of powder distributed to the Indians, and carried away on their ponies; but this gave no concern, as there was none for us."

Bridger was more than a chief guide on such an expedition; he was an adviser to the commanding officer. Thus the precautions about the encampments, such as corralling the wagons into a fortified enclosure, standing guard over both the grazing animals and the camp, refraining from intercourse with the Indians, and the like, were doubtless of the old scout's dictating, even to the minutest detail. He had traveled many thousands of miles with large expeditions, primitive and modern, through hostile territory, and was well versed in the ways of the Indian, and in the arts of protecting a caravan.

Mrs. Carrington gives a good description of Fort Laramie, which was then a most profitable center for traders, most of whom were squaw men. The post had been badly neglected and allowed to run down during the Civil War, and had not undergone any improvement at the time of this visit. Speaking of the leading store she says:

"The long counter of Messrs. Bullock and Ward was a scene of seeming confusion not surpassed in any popular, overcrowded store of Omaha itself. Indians, dressed and half dressed and undressed; squaws dressed to the same degree of completeness as their noble lords; papooses absolutely nude, slightly not nude or wrapped in calico, buckskin, or furs, mingled with soldiers of the garrison, teamsters, emigrants, speculators, half-breeds, and interpreters. Here, cups of rice, sugar, coffee, or flour were being emptied into the looped-up skirts or blanket of a squaw; and there, some tall warrior was grimacing delightfully as he grasped and sucked his long sticks of peppermint candy. Bright shawls, red squaw-cloth, brilliant calicoes, and flashing ribbons passed over the same counter with knives and tobacco, brass nails and glass beads, and that end-

less catalog of articles which belong to the legitimate border traffic. The room was redolent of cheese and herring, and 'heap of smoke'; while the debris of munched crackers lying loose underfoot furnished both nutriment and employment for little bits of Indians too big to ride on mamma's back, and too little to reach the good things on counter or shelves.

"The 'Wash-ta-la!' (very good) mingled with 'Wan-nee-chee!' a very significant 'no good!' whether predicated of person or thing; and the whole scene was a lively episode, illustrating the habits of the noble red men in the marts of trade. Of course, all these Indians were thinking sharply, and many gave words to thoughts, so that an unsophisticated stranger might well doubt whether Bedlam or Babel were the better prototypes of the tongues in use. The Cheyenne supplemented his word with active and expressive gestures, while the Sioux amply used his tongue as well as arms and fingers."

Turning to the council chamber, Mrs. Carrington found it constructed of pine boards "arranged as benches in front of one set of quarters, and over these boards were once fresh evergreens. There was an unique and perfect simplicity in the arrangement, and such considerate *abandon* of all state and ceremony that no Indian need feel that he was kept at an awful distance, or must approach the agents of the Great Father with solemn awe and grave obeisance.

"Under the eaves of all buildings, by doorsteps and porches, and generally everywhere, were twos, threes, or larger groups of hungry, masticating Indians of all sizes, sexes, and conditions, covered with every conceivable degree of superficial clothing or adornment, with the special element of cleanliness just as critically wanting as is usual among the Indians of the Northwest.

"During a long journey we had anticipated with more or less pleasure an attendance upon some of the deliberations and it was understood that the colonel had, without success, requested authority to remain at Laramie during the treaty, in order to become acquainted with the Indians and learn both their disposition and decision as to the new route we were to travel and occupy. But he hurried everybody up, kept his men to the camp, and our stay was cut down to the actual necessities of a marching command. Besides this, it seemed that during the little time we did stop some Indians had been sent for other Indians, and the Indians who actually held possession of the route in dispute were not on hand when they were wanted. This was just as Bridger had predicted the previous autumn.

"The Man afraid of his Horses,' and 'Red Cloud' made no secret of their opposition, and the latter, with all his fighting men, withdrew from all association with the treaty makers and in a very few days quite decidedly developed his hate and his schemes of mischief."

As Colonel Carrington was getting ready to proceed on his journey he called on some of the Indian chiefs, "and when they knew that the command was going to the Powder River country in advance of any treaty agreement, they gave unequivocal demonstrations of their dislike. One pleasant intimation was given that 'In two moons the command would not have a hoof left.' Another with great impressiveness thus explained his crude ideas: 'Great Father send us presents and wants new road, but white chief goes with soldiers to steal road before Indian say yes or no!' Some of us called this good logic.

"Just as the troops left, one of the commissioners came to our ambulance and advised that very little dependence should be placed upon the result of the deliberations so far as the new road was concerned, for a messenger sent out to the Indians had been whipped and sent back with contempt. This was the conviction of all of us; still the ladies kept up good heart, and as they could not well go back, concluded to go on, but agreed to limit their riding on horseback to the vicinity of the train."

As a final disheartening experience at Fort Laramie, Colonel Carrington received a message from the department commander, Philip St. George Cooke, at Omaha, directing that James Bridger be discharged as chief guide to further reduce the expense of the expedition. But Colonel Carrington was new in the wilderness, and had already learned to appreciate Bridger's invaluable service; and the order was indorsed: "Impossible of execution" (77). Bridger did not know he had been discharged, though the War Department files still show the entry opposite Bridger's service record: "June 15, 1866, Discharged." The fact is that Bridger led the Carrington columns through Fort Laramie on June 17, 1866, and thence into the Powder River country, on full pay as chief guide and adviser to the commanding officer.

CHAPTER LV

THE FORT PHIL KEARNEY CONFERENCE

WITH all the ominous forebodings, it was nevertheless easy for some members of the Carrington expedition to throw care and caution to the winds; but not so with James Bridger. He knew the Indians would give the caravan peace only so long as efficient and eternal vigilance prevailed; and that every movement of the whites was closely watched though not a redskin was in sight.

Thus on June 19, about thirty miles from Fort Laramie, the caravan entered the canyon of the Platte, where the inspiring towers and overhanging walls led some of the party to sightseeing. "One or two of the ladies, with Adjutant Phisterer and Doctor Horton, went around the first curve quite within the gorge to hunt for agates and try the effect of pistol shots, the echoes of which were startling, and many times repeated," Mrs. Carrington gives us the episode (78). "The deep, dark waters are closely pent in and shaded by these confines, so as never to enjoy the sunlight; but all of us enjoyed the sublimity and grandeur of this wonderful natural curiosity.

"Old Major Bridger, in his peculiarly quaint and sensible way, dropped the sentiment: 'Better not go fur. There is Injuns enough lying under wolf skins, or skulking on them cliffs, I warrant! They follow ye always. They've seen ye, every day, and when ye don't see any of 'em about, is just the time to look out for their devilment.' The experience of the next morning confirmed his suspicions." Thereupon the canyon became Phisterer canyon. Mrs. Carrington's diary is still our best guide to the happenings at this time.

"June 20. Nine miles of travel brought us to Bridger's Ferry. Here we learned that Indians had, on the previous morning, made a descent upon the stock of Mr. Mills, the proprietor of the Ferry Rancho, although his wife was

a Sioux, and, besides his half-breed children, an Indian lived with him in his employ. This Indian had promptly pursued and recovered part of the stock, which they undoubtedly supposed belonged to immigrants. This Indian said that the marauders were 'Bad Faces' of Red Cloud's band, and that we would certainly have trouble if men or animals were permitted to stray from the command.

"Major Bridger and Mr. Brannan were of the same opinion; and both claimed, as they had at Laramie, that we were advancing directly in the face of hostilities; and Major Bridger went so far as to affirm that the presents which were made to Indians at Laramie were given to positive enemies, or to those who had no influence at all over the war-like bands of the Big Horn and Powder River countries."

Bridger's ferry at the present railroad crossing, two miles east of Orin Junction, Wyo., was a modern installation, "which ingeniously works its own way to and fro by such adjustment of cables and pulleys, and such adaptations to the current, that the round trip was made in about eleven minutes." The herd of beef cattle was forced to swim, under the noisy and determined urging of about a hundred men, though the stream was deep and swift. The wagon train and troops were ferried over in the boat.

Just before leaving the Platte on June 23 "we found an extemporized shed of boards, where Louis Gazzous (French Pete), with his Sioux wife and half-breed children, were opening their merchandise to catch travel over the new route. Here the inevitable display of canned fruits, liquors, tobacco, beads, cutlery, crackers and cheese, were modestly conspicuous and the good-hearted trader decidedly congratulated himself that he had the first stock of goods on the route to the land of gain and gold. Little did he anticipate the doom that awaited him. . . .

"French Pete will be remembered as the first citizen killed during that campaign, and especially as his long course of trade and intimacy with the Indians seemed to promise, at least for himself and family, some con-

siderable favor if not entire immunity at their hands."

The encampment on the 24th was placed on Sage Creek, and on the South Fork of the Cheyenne on the 25th. Dry Branch of Powder River was reached on the 27th, where the first views were gained of the Big Horn mountains and Pumpkin Buttes. On the 28th the expedition reached Fort Reno, where Mrs. Carrington records her gratitude to the chief guide.

"The march which brought us to Reno closed up all possibility of meeting any resident traders; and indeed, with the exception of the fort itself, there was then not a resident white man between Bridger's Ferry and Bozeman City, Montana. We were about to pass the last log cabin, and realize practically the experience of pioneers and test our own capacity for building, keeping house, and living in the land of Absaraka! Single trains of emigrants had passed through the country. Bozeman had made one trip and had succeeded admirably in the selection of his route and our sterling friend, Bridger, had a head full of maps and trails and ideas, all of the utmost value to the objects of the expedition. So we stopped at Reno to prepare for the next and final advance!"

The Fort Reno garrison consisted of two companies of volunteers, who were simply awaiting relief, before being mustered out of service. "A company of Winnebago Indians had been at the fort," Mrs. Carrington tells us; "and we passed them near Laramie on the 17th of June. Many of them wished to come back with us, but there was no existing authority to employ them, and it was generally understood, and distinctly affirmed by Major Bridger, that some of the Sioux at Laramie expressly demanded, as a condition of their own consent to peace, that these Indians should leave the country. If this be true, it was sharp in the Sioux, for the service lost its best scouts, and no depredations had taken place about Reno while it was known that they were there.

"Upon the first alarm these Winnebagoes would spring to their ponies with rifle and lariat, regardless of rations or clothing, and, with one good whoop, disappear in pursuit. Being deadly enemies of the Sioux, it is not to be wondered that the latter should wish them out of the country; but until peace could be absolutely realized, it would have been no prejudice to that line of operation, as events transpired, to have had a few soldiers who knew the Indian style of warfare, and were up to their tricks. . . .

"Three emigrant trains were in the river bottom waiting for the colonel's instructions as to their advance westward; and we were quite surprised to find that the lady travelers with those trains had no fear of Indians, and did not believe there were any bad Indians on the route. One train captain told us ladies we never would see an Indian unless he came to beg for sugar, flour, or tobacco. This was all very gratifying, as this captain had been many years on the plains, and said: 'He couldn't be scared worth a continental.'

"About 10 o'clock the ladies went to the sutler's store of Messrs. Smith and Leighton to do some shopping. Suddenly a breathless messenger rushed in with the cry of '*Indians*,' and said, as intelligently as he could, that the sutler's horses and mules were all gone. Sure enough, upon going to the door, the horses were galloping up the hills across the river, while a party of Indians were following, throwing out flankers to keep the stock in the desired direction, and evidently bending their course toward the Pumpkin Buttes.

"No doubt they had been eager observers of our progress, just as Major Bridger said, and no less watched the emigrants. Probably they supposed the small headquarters camp, with its large corral of wagons, was that of emigrants. At all events, they crossed the river through the timber, taking advantage of a deep ravine, and struck the herd suddenly without loss to themselves, yet passing two or three of our herds, which were under guard, without venturing an attack.

"At this unexpected message all became activity. The colonel was entering the door as the messenger gave the alarm. The bugle brought the mounted men to the saddle, and Brevet Major Haymond and Lieutenant Adair led eighty men in pursuit. It was excessively provoking to see the coolness of those Indians as they favored their ponies in bad places, and seemed to calculate exactly how long they could take things easy and when they must hurry; but they had not long to tarry, and soon were pressing their plunder at the top of their speed."

"Before the return of the party the next day, they had ridden nearly seventy miles, passing along the Pumpkin Buttes, but failed to recapture any of the stolen stock. But they brought in an Indian pony which the Indians abandoned when closely pressed; and this same pony was loaded with favors recently procured at Laramie. Among the variety were navy tobacco, brown sugar, a cavalry stable frock, calico dress patterns, and other articles which from their style and condition, showed that they had not long since been taken from shelves or packages."

"Indeed the opinion expressed by everybody was afterward confirmed from Laramie, and it was thus early understood that the Indians who received presents at that post had immediately violated their obligations and commenced a new career of robbery and war."

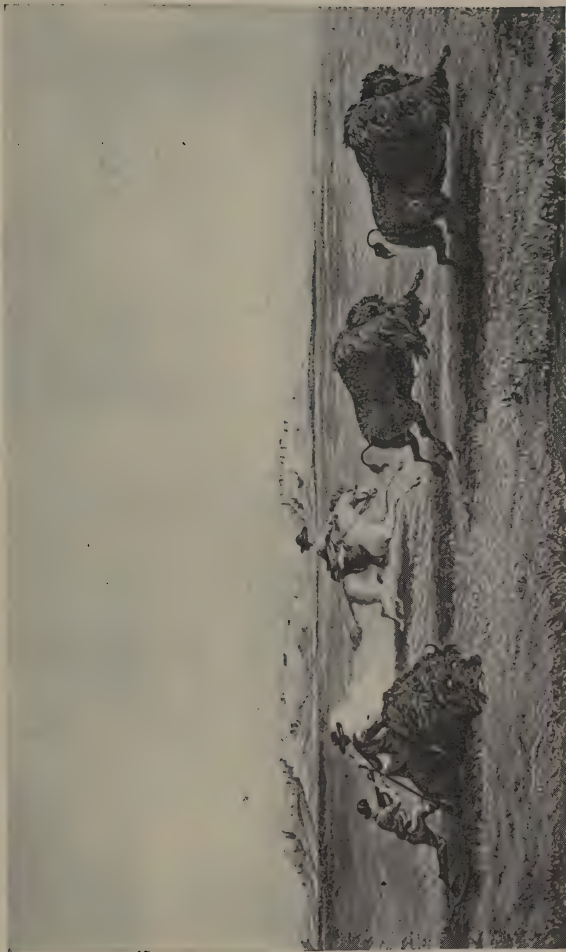
This, we may remark, was a confirmation of Bridger's convictions, previously stated.

After ten days spent at Fort Reno, making repairs to the wagons of the train, the expedition moved northward on July 9, 1866; though while at Reno word came of the countermanding of the order for the guarding of the Reno-Laramie route by the 13th Infantry. "An order was posted at the sutler's store, telling emigrants how to corral their trains, how to deal with or not deal with Indians, and how to procure authority for proceeding beyond the post; and it is a singular fact that every reported disaster to emigrants or other trains during 1866 would have been avoided had the terms of that order been reasonably complied with."

Crazy Woman's Fork became the next night's encampment. "On Friday the 13th we had our next indication of Indians. A few were seen upon a high hill to the left; and after passing Rock Creek, close under a commanding ridge, our attention was called to two small pieces of cracker box planted by the roadside, on which were notes in pencil, stating that two trains had been attacked on the previous Tuesday and Friday, and that some of the stock of each had been driven off." Lake De Smedt was passed at 11 a. m. and an encampment was soon reached on Big Piney Fork, which was favored as a site for the proposed new fort, "but as Major Bridger and Mr. Brannan had both urged that the valleys of Goose Creek and Tongue River should be first visited, no decision was announced."

Colonel Carrington and his aides, with Mr. Brannan, inspected these neighboring valleys on July 14, Bridger remaining at the encampment. Some deserters, who had tried to get through into the Montana gold fields, were intercepted by Indians, and forced to return bearing the intelligence that the white chief must take his soldiers out of the country. In addition a youthful teamster, assisting Louis Gazzous with his traveling ranche, was also captured and instructed by the Indians to fail not in warning Colonel Carrington to leave and enjoy peace, or remain and suffer war. The colonel's detachment returned late, having "crossed buttes and ridges nearer the mountains for the purpose of testing Major Bridger's recommendation that a new and shorter road should be opened to Tongue River Valley."

The colonel sent the young messenger to the Indians inviting them to a conference, and meanwhile the camp was moved to the bench-land adjacent where the new Fort Phil. Kearney was carefully laid out. The encampment was pitched in an orderly fashion "so as to give our visitors as good an impression as possible of our purposes, and determination to remain." Mrs. Carrington's report of the conference is brief, and worth recording here in her own words, since she has much to say of James Bridger, who was the Sioux and Cheyennes' worst enemy.



THE BATTLE FOR BUFFALO MEAT, resulting in the far greater battle between the red men and the whites, as the Indians' food supply dwindled. Scene sketched by Percy near Scott's Bluffs. (58)

"At 12 o'clock July 16, a few Indians appeared on the hills, and after showing a white flag and receiving assurance of welcome, about forty, including the squaws of chiefs and warriors, approached the camp and bivouacked on the level ground in front. Meanwhile hospital tents had been arranged for this first interview with the inhabitants of Absaraka.

"A table covered with the national flag was placed across one tent, chairs were placed behind, and at the ends were officers of the garrison, while other seats were placed in front for visitors.

"Trunks were opened, epaulettes and dress hats were overhauled, so that whatever of full dress and a little ceremony could do by way of reaching the peculiar taste of the Indian for dignity and finery, was done. The band of the 18th played without, as the principal chiefs were brought across the parade ground to the tents and introduced to their seats by Mr. Adair. The Cheyennes came in full state, with their best varieties of costumes, ornament and arms; though there was occasionally a departure from even the Indian originality in apparel. One very tall warrior, with richly wrought moccasins and a fancy breech-cloth, had no other covering for his person than a large gay umbrella, which, as his pony galloped briskly up, had far more of the grotesque and ludicrous in its associations than it had of the warlike and fearful.

"Some were bare to the waist, others had only the limbs bare. Some wore elaborate necklaces of grizzly bears' claws, shells, and continuous rings, bead-adorned moccasins, leggings, tobacco pouches, medicine bags and knife-scabbards, as well as armlets, earrings, and medals.

"The larger silver medals included, one each, of the administrations and bore the medallion heads and names of Jefferson, Madison, and Jackson. These medals had evidently belonged to their fathers who had visited Washington, or had been the trophies of the field of trade.

"Those who claimed pre-eminence among the land were Black Horse, Red Arm, Little Moon, Pretty Bear, The Rabbit That Jumps, The Wolf That Lies Down, The Man That Stands Alone On The Ground, and Dull Knife.

"As these were the Indians who had sent the message of the 14th, or were in their company, the question of their inclination and temper was one of no little interest to all.

"The formal assurance of the Laramie Peace Commission before its adjournment, that satisfactory peace had been made with Ogillalla and Brule Sioux, and that the Arapahoes and Cheyennes had only to come in for their presents, inspired some hope that possibly the reception of this first band encountered, might result in substantial advance beyond the mere range of the band itself.

"As the front of the canvas was opened, the ladies gathered in the headquarters tent close by, parted its folds and enjoyed a

dress-circle view of the whole performance. As pipes passed, and the inevitable 'How,' the rising up, and the shaking of hands were interludes between all solemn declarations, as well as the prelude to a new speech, or the approval of something good that had been said, the scene seemed just about as intelligible as a rapidly-acted pantomime would be to a perfect stranger to the stage.

"The red sand-stone pipe had its frequent replenishings before a single 'How' indicated that either visitor wished to make himself heard. The scene was peculiar.

"In front of them all, and to the left of the table, sitting on a low seat, with elbows on his knees and chin buried in his hands, sat the noted James Bridger, whose forty-four years upon the frontier had made him as keen and suspicious of Indians as any Indian himself could be of another. The old man, already somewhat bowed by age, after long residence among the Crows, as a friend and favorite chief, and having incurred the bitter hatred of the Cheyennes and Sioux alike, knew full well that his scalp ('Big Throat's')²⁹ would be the proudest trophy they could bear to their solemn feasts; and there he sat, or crouched, as watchful as though old times had come again, and he was once more to mingle in the fight, or renew the ordeal of his many hair-breadth escapes and spirited adventures.

"Many stories are told of his past history, and he is charged with many of his own manufacture. He is said to have seen a diamond in the Rocky Mountains by the light of which he traveled thirty miles one stormy night; and to have informed some inquisitive travelers that Scott's Bluffs nearly four hundred feet high, now stand where there was a deep valley when he first visited that country. When inquired of as to these statements, he quietly intimated that there was no harm in fooling people who pumped him for information and would not even say 'Thank You.'

"Once he was wealthy, and his silver operations in Colorado might have been very lucrative; but he was the victim of misplaced confidence, and was always restless when not on the plains. To us, he was invariably straightforward, truthful, and reliable. His sagacity, knowledge of woodcraft, and knowledge of the Indians was wonderful, and his heart was warm and his feelings tender wherever he confided or made a friend. An instance of this will close the sketch of one who will soon pass away, the last of the first pioneers of the Rocky Mountains.

"He cannot read, but enjoys reading. He was charmed by Shakespeare; but doubted the bible story of Samson's tying foxes by the tails, and with fire-brands burning the wheat of the Philistines. At last he sent for a good copy of Shakespeare's plays, and would hear them read until midnight with unfeigned pleasure.

29. Bridger had become afflicted with goitre.

The murder of the two princes in the tower startled him to indignation. He desired it to be read a second time and a third time. Upon positive conviction that the text was properly read to him, he burned the whole set, convinced that 'Shakespeare must have had a bad heart and been as de——h mean as a Sioux, to have written such scoundrelism as that.' But to return to the Council.

"Near Major Bridger stood Jack Stead, the interpreter, born in England, early a runaway sailor boy, afterward a seaman upon the Peacock when it was wrecked near the mouth of Columbia River; then traversing the Rocky Mountains as one of the first messengers to report the Mormon preparations to resist the United States, and the renewal of Indian hostilities the same year; with hair and eyes black as an Indian's, and a face nearly as tawny from hardship and exposure; a good shot, and skilled in woodcraft; with a Cheyenne wife; fond of big stories and much whiskey; but a fair interpreter when mastered and held to duty; and watchful as Bridger himself to take care of his scalp—Jack Stead was the first to break the silence and announce that Black Horse wanted to talk. . . .

"Erect and earnest, he cast off the buffalo robe that had been gathered about his shoulders and in his folded arms, and while it now hung loosely from his girdle, stepped half way toward the table and began.

"With a fire in his eye, and such spirit in his gesture as if he were striking a blow for his life or the life of his nation; with cadence changeful, now rising in tone, so as to sound far and wide over the garrison, and again sinking so as to seem as if he were communing with his own spirit rather than feeling for a response from the mind of another, the Cheyenne chief stood there to represent his people, to question the plans of the white chief, and solemnly advise him of the issue that was forced upon the red man. It was an occasion when all idea of the red man as the mere wild beast to be slaughtered, quickly vanished in a prompt sympathy with his condition, and no less inspired and earnest purpose, so far as possible, to harmonize the intrusion upon his grand hunting domain with his best possible well being in the future.

"Other chiefs followed Black Horse, in harangues of varied length and vigor; and all agreed that they preferred to accept protection and become the friend of the whites. They came to represent one hundred and seventy-six lodges, and had been hunting on Goose Creek and Tongue River when they met Red Cloud; but said that one hundred and twenty-five of their young men were absent with Bob Tail, having gone to the Arkansas on the war path and hunt. . . .

"They gave the history of a portion of our march and stated correctly what Red Cloud had assured them, that half of the white soldiers were left back at Crazy Woman's Fork. They said that

Red Cloud told them, the morning before the messenger was sent to the camp, that white soldiers from Laramie would be at Piney Fork before the sun was overhead in the heavens; that the white chief sent soldiers from Reno after Indians who stole horses and mules; but the white soldiers did not get them back.

Thus far the Cheyennes of that particular group had declined to accept the urgent invitation of the Sioux to drive the whites back into Powder River Valley, a campaign then under way by the Sioux. Accepting from Colonel Carrington certificates indicating their good behavior, and presents of second hand clothing, tobacco, flour, bacon, sugar, and coffee sufficient to convince their fellow villagers of their kind treatment, they left in the early afternoon, with the understanding that they were not to approach emigrant trains for any purpose; but were to always be privileged to call at any of the military posts when hungry. "There is no evidence that any of these chiefs have violated their pledges," (to 1868).

CHAPTER LVI

BRIDGER'S ROUTE TO MONTANA

CHIEF BLACK HORSE and his Cheyenne tribesmen, on leaving the peace meeting at Colonel Carrington's encampment, were interrogated by an indignant Sioux war party, and were grossly insulted for their peace arrangements. Meeting Louis Gazzous (French Pete) and party, Black Horse warned them to leave the Sioux country at once if they valued their lives, despite the favorable influence of French Pete's Sioux wife and her connections. But on the morning of July 17, 1866, the Sioux marauders boldly dashed into the herds near the Carrington encampment and drove away a band of the horses. In making off with them, the Sioux fell upon French Pete, slaying him and five men companions, the trader's squaw and half-breed children escaping only by hiding in the brush. Thus while the new fort site had been so propitiously set apart in a successful peace parley, it was promptly baptized in blood by the West's worst warriors, who swarmed the entire region in ever increasing rage at the presence of the whites.

In spite of this doubtful state of the country, it seemed positively necessary to send a detachment to Fort Reno for provisions, and Captain Burrows was ordered on this detail, the party being piloted by Chief Guide James Bridger. They left on July 19, following Black Horse and his band a few days, on their way to the Platte road. Captain Burrows reached the Crazy Woman's Fork in the nick of time to dispel a large besieging band of Sioux who had an emigrant train and a detachment of soldiers surrounded. Chief Black Horse had met the besieged party a day or two previously, and warned them, as he warned French Pete, of the grim determination of the Sioux, but they had neglected to give full weight to the admonition. Mr. S. S. Peters has written the story of this battle for Mrs. Frances C. Carrington (77), a small portion of his narrative being worthy of a place here.

Two daring scouts had slipped out of the besieged corral, through a ravine, and in a race for their lives, outran the few pursuing Sioux. But "scarcely had Wallace and White disappeared in the east," Peters tells us, having been within that fateful corral, "when a cloud of dust was to be observed across the creek to the northwest of us. We divined it to be reinforcements for the Indians. The Indians saw the dust, and they began to rally together and shortly thereafter disappeared in groups down in the timber northward. This movement was unaccountable for some time. The sun had now set and it was growing successively darker.

"Finally a solitary horseman was observed coming over the little ridge to our left. Before he reached the ravine he was ordered to halt. He did so and shouted back that he was a friend.

"'What's your name?'

"'Jim Bridger.'

"And so it was. He was crossing through the ravine and came on up to the corral.

"'I knew there was hell to pay here today at Crazy Woman,' said he to a group of officers. 'I could see it from the signs the Indians made on the buffalo skulls. But cheer up, boys, Captain Burrows and two hundred soldiers are coming down the road there about two miles away.'

"After further inquiry it was learned that Captain Burrows with a detachment of two hundred men of the Eighteenth were on the road from Fort Carrington to Fort Reno for supplies. The command had intended to make the usual camp that night at Clear Fork, but Jim Bridger, the famous scout who was with the party, reported that he had discovered several signs by markings made by Indians on buffalo skulls that a battle was to be fought at Crazy Woman today, and advising all Indians who saw the sign to be on hand. Burrows rather derided the story, and expressed his serious doubts about there being any party at Crazy Woman today at all. Bridger was insistent, however, and so the Burrows command decided to make the Crazy Woman camp by a forced march.

"So our little command was saved from annihilation. . . .

"After a day or two of rest we started again on the march to Fort Carrington and arrived there without incident. We carried with us the order changing the name of the post to Fort Phil Kearney, and thus it was ever afterwards known.

Bridger is generally credited with originating the practice of corralling the emigrant wagons against Indian attacks. "Colonel Carrington had practical ideas in regard to the movement of emigrants. He believed that these trains should proceed cautiously and should corral on the approach of war parties. He argued that to show a determination to protect themselves would have the desired effect on the prowling bands of savages, and in most cases

such trains would escape disaster. There was nothing new about this, as Jim Bridger had advocated this method of passing through an Indian country for more than forty years, and there is little doubt that this old guide was responsible for Colonel Carrington's timely advice to emigrants." (18)

Captain Burrows' detail was soon accomplished, and Bridger was back at Fort Phil Kearney, serving largely in the capacity of watch-dog about the post through that troublous autumn and early winter. "There was one faithful, honest, and simple-minded white man at the post," recalls Mrs. Frances C. Carrington, "the colonel's confidential guide at all times, who seemed instinctively to know the invisible as well as the visible operations of the Indian, good old Jim Bridger. His devotion to the ladies and children, and his willingness to cheer them the best he could, were as prized as were his quaint tales of his long experience.

"He used to tell us stories occasionally at the Fort," continued Mrs. Carrington. "He ridiculed the frontiersmen for their 'gold craze'; and he laughed himself as he told a hunter once that 'there was a diamond out near the Yellowstone country that was on a mountain, and if any one was lucky enough to get the right range it could be seen fifty miles; and one fool offered him a new rifle and a fine horse if he would put him on the right track to go for that diamond.

"Bridger would walk about constantly scanning the opposite hills that commanded a good view of the fort, as if he suspected Indians of having scouts behind every sage clump or fallen cottonwood; and toward evening, as well as in the early morning, it was not strange if we caught flashes of small hand mirrors which were used by the Indians in giving signals to other Indians who were invisible from the fort. Indeed all sights and sounds were of constant interest, if not of dread, living so constantly in the region of the senses, keyed to their highest tone by the life external.

"I often wondered why a post so isolated was not swept away by a rush of mighty numbers of the surrounding savages, to avenge in one vast holocaust, the invasion of their finest hunting grounds. Only our strong defenses prevented an assault, and the depletion of our numbers by attacks upon our exposed wood trains seemed to be their sole hope of finding some opportunity by which to find the way to final extermination of the garrison itself.

"The nights were made hideous at times by the hungry wolves which gathered in hordes about the slaughter-yard of the quartermaster, without the stockade, and near the Little Piney Creek. The only reassuring comfort was the statement of Bridger and others that Indians were rarely near when many wolves were present, and that they could distinguish the howl of the wolf from the cry of the Indian by the fact that the former produced no echo.

"Once indeed, Indians, knowing that the soldiers were accus-

tomed to put poison in the offal at the slaughter-yard to secure the pelts of the wolves for robes, crawled up close to the stockade, crawling under wolfskins that covered their bodies, and a sentry was actually shot from the banquettes that lay along the stockade, by an arrow, before any knowledge of the vicinity of the enemy came to the garrison."

The events at the much hated little fort during the summer and autumn were punctuated very frequently by skirmishes and fights, practically every detail of men that went to the timber to get out the necessary timbers for the fort being attacked. There were also numerous attacks on emigrant parties, and upon the military escorts furnished them. Hundreds of horses and cattle were stampeded from the forts and from the emigrants, the Sioux giving no quarter and offering no respite. Mrs. Carrington's journal (78) mentions from one to three fights a day, and fights on almost every day in July, August and September.

Thus the military cemetery grew more rapidly than any other feature at the new Fort. After one burial of several soldiers and officers, one narrator observes (77): "and thus, at last, but not the last, after all the random skirmishes and frequent pursuits of stock-stealing parties, there had been a pitched fight to increase and intensify the Commandant's assurances, backed up by the guide Bridger, that the enemy was increasing in force, and was watchful of every exposure or recklessness of parties leaving the Fort for whatever purpose, to destroy us utterly."

Bridger made a number of journeys to other posts, and to certain Indian tribes for conferences, late that summer; and an entry in Colonel Carrington's official report is as follows: "Messenger from Fort C. F. Smith brings message that, at the request of Mr. Bridger, a party of Crows visited the post, reporting five hundred lodges of Sioux in Tongue River valley, all hostile. Cheyenne chiefs, viz: Black Horse, Red Arm, Little Wolf, Dull Knife, and others, with whom I had council in July (1866) and who went beyond the mountains south as they promised, brought me the same report."

Early in October Colonel Carrington directed Bridger to examine and map out a route from Fort Phil Kearney to the Montana gold fields, for the use of emigrants. Describing this expedition and its accomplishments Mrs. Carrington says: (78)

"Measures were taken to hold communication with the Crow Indians, to consult with the authorities of Montana, and determine the condition of the entire route to Virginia City. Major Bridger was selected for the mission, accompanied by Henry Williams, assistant guide, who proved himself valuable in almost every work he undertook. They made the trip through with comparative expedition, made complete notes of the journey, and besides their

official report, were very courteous in contributing their information to those who were desirous to keep a full record of all that transpired during our sojourn on the frontier."

Mrs. Carrington thus virtually states that this story as she wrote it came from Bridger, and from Williams, who wrote down what Bridger said of the route, in the way of a log or guide for all tourists. Bridger could not write, but his memory was better than some notebooks. The narrative continues: "They had first an interview with nearly six hundred warriors, not far from Clark's Fork. On that occasion White Mouth, Black Foot, and Rotten Tail declared their uniform and unanimous voice for peace; but said that in some instances the young men desired to join the Sioux, and thus come to some accommodation as to their title to the lands of which they had been robbed by both Sioux and Cheyennes.

"Red Cloud had made them a visit and they had returned the visit, but would not join him against the whites. The Man Afraid of His Horses told them that his young men were going on the warpath and that the Sissetons, Bad Faces, Ogallalas from the Missouri, the Minnecongous from the Black Hills, the Unkpapas, some Cheyennes and Arapahoes, as well as the Gros Ventres of the prairie, were united to drive away the whites, and would have big fights at the two new Forts in the fall.

"They also represented that Iron Shell, with some of the young men of the Minnecongous and Brules, would go with Red Cloud, notwithstanding the Laramie treaty; that the Nez Perces and Flatheads were friendly, but the Pagans and Bloods were hostile, while the Blackfeet, Assiniboinés, and the Crees were friendly with both parties and would join no league against the whites.

"Besides the visits of Bridger to other bands of Crows along the route from Big Horn to the upper Yellowstone, James Beckwith, the famous mulatto of the Plains, who had also lived among the Crows as an adopted Chief, and had several Crow wives, was employed as an assistant guide, and was sent to their villages, where he subsequently sickened and died.

"From these sources it was learned that in the fight of September 23 the Sioux lost thirteen killed and had a great many wounded. Other parties of Crows came to Fort C. F. Smith to hunt and trade in that vicinity, and not only showed uniform friendliness toward the whites and the new road, but offered two hundred and fifty young warriors to engage in operations against the Sioux. Major Bridger had great confidence in this proposition; but the officers, it would seem, had no authority to employ so many, as well as no means of arming and equipping them when employed.

"All the statements of the Crows were substantially confirmed by Cheyennes at a subsequent visit. They represented Red Cloud and The Man Afraid of His Horses, to be in Tongue River valley and Buffalo Tongue to be on Powder River; that the Big Bellies, the

Bad Arrows, Those That Wear a Bone in the Nose, and Those That Put Meat in the Pot were near the Big Horn River, and though friendly to the Crows, were opposed to the road; that Bob North, White Man with But One Thumb, with twenty-five lodges and the Big Medicine Man of the Arapahoes had also joined the aggressive party.

"Still later in the season there was renewed and cumulative evidence that the Crows were truly friendly, but were unwilling to venture very far eastward for any purpose, until the Sioux were out of the way, or the white soldiers were sufficiently numerous to guarantee their safety without sacrifice of life or property.

"White Mouth and Rotten Tail told Mr. Bridger that they were half a day in riding through the hostile villages in Tongue River valley, and that fifteen hundred lodges of war parties were preparing to attack the white man at Fort Philip Kearney and Fort C. F. Smith.

"All these statements were believed, and it is known that they had important influence in that vigorous prosecution of necessary work which followed and rendered impossible any system of aggressive war on the part of the troops of the garrison."

Of the description of Bridger's Trail, Mrs. Carrington says: "The trip of Major James Bridger and guide, Henry Williams, in 1866, who were sent forth by Colonel Carrington to visit the authorities of Montana and survey the route, or shorten it and open a new route, furnishes many facts additional to those contained in the report of Colonel Sawyer, and their notes, somewhat abridged, are by permission freely used for our present purpose, with the confidence that this will always be an avenue for travel, though interrupted in the settlement of Indian questions for a time.

"The following statement closely approximates the odometer measurements of General Hazen in 1866, and while this is twenty miles less than Colonel Sawyer's route, the course of travel adopted by Major Bridger confirms his opinion that nearly thirty miles more can be saved as soon as the government or emigration can safely operate and improve the road:

Fort Philip Kearney to Fort C. F. Smith.....	91 miles
Fort C. F. Smith to Clark's Fork.....	63 "
Clark's Fork to Yellowstone Ferry.....	90 "
Yellowstone Ferry to Bozeman City.....	51 "
Bozeman City to Virginia City.....	70 "

Total365 miles

The first distance is divisible as follows:

Fort Philip Kearney to Peno Creek Branch.....	5 miles
To North Bank of Peno Creek with timber, grass and water	7 "

To Second Crossing of Peno Creek, with same supplies	6 miles
To Crossing of Goose Creek, with same supplies.....	4 "
To Brown's Fork of Tongue River, with same supplies	13 "
To East Fork of Little Horn River, with same supplies	17 "
To Grass Lodge Creek, with same supplies.....	15 "
To Rotten Grass Creek, with same supplies.....	16 "
To Fort C. F. Smith, Bridger's Cut-off.....	8 "
<hr/>	
Total	91 miles

"Between Tongue River and Little Horn River eight forks are crossed, the largest of which, Colonel Kinney's Fork, is quite a stream of clear water, with nearly two feet of depth in the autumn. Between Little Horn and Big Horn Rivers are nine small streams of constant water.

"The Big Horn River is nearly three hundred and thirty yards wide, with from three to six feet of water, and is crossed by a substantial ferry. In 1866 Kirkendall's train lost a wagonmaster by attempting to ford it; but it can be forded with some little risk to stock and merchandise, at a low stage of water. It is unsafe for strangers, and the ferry is indispensable to general travel.

"Fort C. F. Smith on the Big Horn River, was built by Brevet Lieut.-Col. N. C. Kinney, captain of the Eighteenth Infantry, in 1866, and suffered less from Indian adventures on account of the vicinity of the friendly Crow Indians, and because it was west of the main hunting grounds of the Arapahoes, Cheyennes and Sioux. It is the last residence of white men until the traveler reaches Bozeman City.

"Associated with Captain Kinney in the building of Fort C. F. Smith, and with wonderful vigor and patience resisting the effect of wounds and apprehended heart disease, should be mentioned Brevet Maj. Thomas B. Burrows. His father is well known as the veteran friend of education in Pennsylvania.

"The second distance, before referred to, is divisible as follows:

From Fort C. F. Smith to Dubois Creek, a fork of Beauvais Fork of Big Horn River, N. W. by N.....	10 miles
This stream is about fifteen feet wide. Road good except the crossings of two small creeks, and distant from the mountains about seven miles. The timber is ash and boxelder.	
To North Fork of Dubois Creek, N. W. by N.....	10 miles
Road crosses small creeks and ravines and is quite bad. Stream is narrow, and eight miles from the mountains. Grass good, and timber for fuel.	
To South Fork of Pryor's River, N. W.....	8 miles
Road passes one long canyon, cutting the divide between Big Horn and Rocky Ranges, crossing	

several creeks, and in places quite rough. Grass good.

- To Ice Water Spring, N. W. by N..... 15 miles
 At four miles is water in a small branch. At five miles farther is Millard's Spring, with good grass and water. This spring rises and flows from a high level prairie, four miles from the base of the mountains, forming a branch of Pryor's River, three feet wide and twelve inches deep. At six miles farther comes Ice Water Spring, with good grass but no timber, although at Pryor's River, two miles beyond, the timber is abundant. Road is in many places quite rocky. Ice Water Springs rise from a mound in the prairie, supplying four small streams, which unite in a channel six feet wide and three feet deep, flowing with great rapidity.
- To Spring Creek, W. N. W..... 8 miles
 Road crosses Pryor River and its four miles of beautiful valley, thence up the valley of Spring Creek, or North Fork of Pryor's River. Here are many steep bluffs until the road attains the summit of the divide between Pryor's River and Clark's Fork. Grass excellent. Only sufficient timber for fuel.
- To Clark's Fork, nearly W..... 12 miles
 The road is good, and all prairie except two dry Creek crossings, which are not decidedly bad. Clark's Fork is here nearly one hundred yards wide, with a rich valley and abundance of grass and timber.
- Total 63 miles
- The third distance is divisible as follows:
- To Rocky Fork 7 miles
 This stream is forty-five yards wide, about three feet deep, with good ford. Luxuriant timber and grass. Ten miles from the mountains.
- To Berdan's Creek—Branch of Rocky Fork..... 12 miles
 Rocky Fork is crossed twice. Good camping ground is found every three miles. Grass and timber abundant.
- To South Fork of Rosebud..... 10 miles
 Three miles up Berdan's Creek. Road rough until the main divide is reached, between this creek and the South Fork of Rosebud. Stream about fifteen feet wide and two feet deep, abounding in beaver dams. Grass good; but only sufficient timber for fuel. Road runs six miles from mountains.

To Rosebud River camp	8 miles
Down South Fork of Rosebud one mile; thence crossing a divide of three miles. Rosebud is nearly twenty-five yards wide and two and one-half feet deep. Cottonwood and willow timber is plentiful and grass good. Thence down Rosebud four miles to best camp. About ten miles from the mountains.	
To Stillwater, W. S. W.	6 miles
Road crosses the main Rosebud and follows up Stillwater Fork of Rosebud. Road good, timber heavy, and grass good. Stream is about sixty-five yards wide, three feet deep, and quite a rocky ford. About six miles from the mountains.	
To Emmil's Fork	18 miles
The road runs W. S. W. to North Fork of the Stillwater. Grass and timber very heavy, and camping grounds every three miles. One divide is crossed before reaching Emmil's Fork, which here empties into the Yellowstone River. Emmil's Fork, named from the massacre of Emmil's party in 1822, is about twenty feet wide and eighteen inches deep. The Yellowstone is here about one hundred and twenty yards wide and from three to five feet deep. The valley is from six to fifteen miles wide, and timber is very heavy.	
To Big Boulder Creek	17 miles
Eight miles up Yellowstone Valley, crossing Lower Cross Creek at five miles, and Upper or Big Cross Creek, three miles beyond. Road, grass, and timber good; thence the road is over level prairie nine miles, with abundance of grass and timber.	
To Yellowstone Ferry	12 miles
Road good. Timber is mostly on the north bank. The ferry is diagonally across the river, of nearly two hundred and seventy-five yards.	
Total	90 miles
The fourth distance is divisible as follows:	
Yellowstone Ferry to Warm Springs, S. W.	4½ miles
Up the Yellowstone River, after crossing, four and one-half miles. Road here bears west toward the hills, becoming very heavy, and crossing a succession of small creeks and ravines.	
To Twenty-five Yard River	10½ miles
Southwest five miles across the ridge to the Yellowstone. Road difficult, crossing sidling hills. Up the valley to the foot of Big Hill. Across the ridge, with better road, three and one-half miles. This	

river derives its name from its width. Plenty of young timber and grass good.

To Beaver or Pass Creek	17 miles
Road runs S.W. by S. Road for ten miles very good, until leaving the river and entering the pass called Flathead or Clark's Pass. The last eight miles crosses a number of spring creeks, which flow from the Snow Range. No timber in this pass, except small pine and aspen.	
To Cold Spring Creek	10 miles
Up Beaver or Pass Creek. Road very rough. Grass good. Timber in abundance, of small varieties of pine and aspen.	
To Headwaters, Cold Spring Creek	5 miles
Road crosses the divide to the east branch of Gallatin River. Timber largely destroyed by fire several years ago.	
To Bozeman City	4 miles
Down the East Gallatin River. Here is a successful flour mill, and a small but thrifty village.	
Total	51 miles
The fifth distance is divisible as follows: Road adopted in 1866:	
To Madison River	33 miles
Southwest to West Gallatin River thirteen miles. Road runs across a valley which is twelve miles, and nearly all occupied by farms, with abundance of grass, and well watered by small streams from the mountains. This river is about one hundred and fifty yards wide, and from two to two and one-half feet deep, very swift, with a heavy growth of cottonwood timber. Thence southwest by south, nearly twenty miles across the dividing ridge to the Madison River. Road good; grass abundant; but little timber near the road.	
To Meadow Creek	21 miles
Road crosses Madison River. This river is nearly two hundred yards wide and three feet deep. Thence up the stream five miles, westward up a canyon four miles, to main divide of Hot Spring valley. This spring boils up vigorously, and with temperature unpleasant to the hand. Near the first quartz leads. The road is good, but rough. Thence south across the divide to Meadow Creek twelve miles.	
To Virginia City—By Cut-off	16 miles
The usual road is twenty-two miles.	
Total	70 miles
Aggregate distances	365 miles

CHAPTER LVII

INDIAN MASTERY AT FORT PHIL KEARNEY

EARLY in the autumn of 1866, Brevet Lieut.-Col. William J. Fetterman reached Fort Phil Kearney obsessed with the belief that a company of regulars could whip a thousand Indians, and a regiment could silence forever all the hostile tribes in the West. He declared he could take ninety good men and go through the worst Sioux territory to Tongue River, and was greatly chagrined when Colonel Carrington refused him the necessary permission. "To this boast my chief guide, the veteran James Bridger, replied in my presence, 'Your men who fought down south are crazy! They don't know anything about fighting Indians,'" declared Colonel Carrington (77).

Bridger knew that as far as the existing garrison was concerned, the Indians were practically invincible. The soldiers were clumsy horsemen, encumbered with heavy guns which they could not fire from the saddle, while the mounts themselves were unsuited to the ravine and canyon running necessary in an Indian fight. He knew also that the red man was perfect in horsemanship, cunning in strategy, expert in ambush and decoy tactics, exceptionally wary in battle and highly careful of his own life.

The Indian was buoyed by great jubilation over a victory, and he was most fiendish and terrible in wreaking his hellish vengeance, when opportunity afforded. A governing superstition forbade his leaving the dead on a battle field if at all preventable. While he was bold and daring, he was at the same time very watchful of his own resources, and would thus never indulge in a fair fight, as white men regard fairness. He would watch and wait day on day for a chance to bring down a small party of foolhardy or unprotected whites, and go yelling across the country flourishing their bloody scalps. He was quick

and accurate in estimating the strength of the opponent; and as a scout the savage had very few equals among the white men.

When the white man fired his gun, the Indian had learned to improve the respite while the weapon was being reloaded. Such an interval was a signal for a wild charge, with revolvers and arrows in quick action, thus minimizing their own losses as the swift ponies carried them safely away again for the renewal of the attack as opportunity offered. Circling and intermingling to confuse all aim, affecting retreat seemingly to break up their array; and by some ravine, gulch, canyon or thicket, to appear on fresh or better vantage ground, they approximated ubiquity, and filled the terse description of the veteran Bridger, "where there ain't no Injuns, you'll find 'em thickest" (78).

The Indian saw as clearly as if it were already an accomplished fact, that when the white man got his forts established across the Indians' beloved hunting grounds, and properly manned for guarding the traffic on the route, the wild game would disappear before the white man's rifle and cultivated fields, along with the Indian's sole subsistence. Thus he fought for his very existence, and distrusted the white man with all his heart. When Black Horse urged Red Cloud to join him in taking the white man's hand, and what was offered in it of gifts, rather than fight any longer and lose all, Red Cloud's answer was, "White man lies and steals. My lodges were many, but now they are few. The white man wants all. The white man must fight, and the Indian will die where his fathers died" (78).

As to the efficiency of the Indian's fighting equipment, Bridger had not the slightest misconception, no more than he had of the Indian's fighting methods, for the old scout had more than once come within range of these effective weapons. He had not only stopped the flying arrow, but the spear and tomahawk had been felt at close range. He knew very well that at fifty yards a well-shaped, iron pointed missile was very dangerous. A handful of arrows could be launched with deadly aim at close range with

greater rapidity than the revolver shots of that day; and he had seen it demonstrated, that at short range the arrow driven by a powerful bow could be sent through a two-inch plank, a man's body, or even a buffalo.

The thin iron arrowhead used by the Sioux and Cheyennes was often barbed, and was usually from two to three and one-half inches long. The arrow shaft was about twenty-five inches in length, winged with feathers attached by sinew wrappings as was the metal point. The shank was deeply grooved with the so-called blood seams, to serve as drains, by means of which a flesh wound might be induced to bleed disastrously. The bows were from thirty-two to forty inches in length, and very powerful and elastic. The hatchet obtained from the traders, and the heavy spears of their own make, from five to seven feet in length, were also very dangerous weapons in the hands of warriors, skilled from their youth in their use.

Now and then an Indian had learned the use of fire-arms, which he had come into possession of beside the body of a dead white man or otherwise, but as a rule, up to the time Bridger left the plains, such weapons were of little value to the red man, for he was not a marksman. "The Indians not only use mirrors and flags for signal purposes, but many carry with them good field and spy-glasses, some of English styles procured from Canada, and others are supplied by the traders on the frontier" (78).

The coming of the winter of 1866-1867 did not cool the passions of the Sioux, but rather roused them to a final desperate movement on the offending forts along the Bozeman and Bridger trails, especially the headquarters post at Fort Phil Kearney. Scouts flickered along the visible horizon, and even Bridger regretted more than once the circumstances of the army having aroused the reds to such a frenzy, with but a comparative handful of soldiers to oppose them.

Bridger had, however, continued to exercise every iota of his craftiness against his worthy enemies in this respect, and the fort itself was never actually attacked.

Neither were the trains bound for the Pinery, seven miles distant, where the fort timbers were being gotten out and milled. This was averted by a slight modification of the plainsman's wagon corralling scheme, said to have been originated by Bridger (18), whereby the wood trains of some ninety wagons moved in two parallel lines a few rods apart, guarded by troops, ever on the lookout. Instantly on the cry of "Indians," a close corral could be formed while weapons were made ready. No corral of this nature, it was declared, was ever attacked in that entire campaign, between Fort Laramie and Virginia City, though many emigrants moved without escort when none was available.

But if a detachment left the fort, or the wood train, the thickly swarming hornets had proved more than once their supremacy of both numbers and results. Thus it was that the popular Lieutenant Bingham and Sergeant Bowers were "massacred" on December 6, though repeated warnings had been issued against visiting out of the way places, and especially against pursuing Indian decoys, as these men had apparently done. Red Cloud commanded the Indian hosts that day in person, the white signal flags of the savages indicating a fighting line seven miles in length.

This episode, however, was merely a taste of blood, and the wildly clamoring redmen had to wait only until December 21, for another detachment of about ninety men, under Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Fetterman, fed themselves into the greedy Indian maws in what has become the "Fetterman Massacre," since eighty-one of those engaged were annihilated promptly. Captain Fetterman's enthusiasm and self-confidence evidently got the better of his good sense, and while he was admonished to remain with the wood train, he promptly rode off over a beautiful ridge trimmed with Indians in war paint, and thence into the dismal valley of death. Ringing in his ears as he departed were James Bridger's warning that the Indians were not to be taunted nor tempted, and Colonel Carrington's orders against passing over the ridge.

That very morning Chief Two Moons and a small party of so-called friendly Cheyennes were sent to the fort to beg supplies ostensibly, but in reality to spy out the premises and forces, to enable the Indian leaders to arrange their plans for taking the post and destroying its inmates. Here Two Moons met James Bridger, he related later, and had quite a long visit. Bridger showed him the post, imparting to the vulnerable red man the conviction that the post was impregnable (77). Gaining Bridger's viewpoint completely, Two Moons reported to his leaders that the place could not be taken without a tremendous loss. Thus came the decision among the hostiles to continue to give their attention to the wood cutters and the guarding detachments, though at the time several thousand Indians were massed for grim finalities.

The Pinery timber train, after a late start, had not been long out of the fort when, about eleven o'clock, the pickets began shouting the Indian warnings, having seen the "many Indians" signs pantomimed from scouts on Pilot Hill. The timber train had been suddenly corralled but a short way from the stockade, and a detail of about ninety men was ordered out for immediate relief, under Major J. W. Powell. Colonel Fetterman came forward, insisting that because of his seniority he be placed in command, in Major Powell's place, which Colonel Carrington acceded to. Lieutenant Grummond also requested and was given permission to accompany the relief detachment.

The howitzers belching case shot, containing an explosive charge of eighty one-ounce balls, fired from the gun platform in the stockade, scattered a few groups of daring Indian scouts seen along the ridge, giving Captain Fetterman's troops a clearance. Doctor Hines was dispatched after the troops, as an afterthought, but he soon returned reporting the troops already out of sight beyond the hill, and the intervening valley swarming with Indians. Fetterman had not gone in the direction of the timber train, but apparently over the ridge in the direction forbidden by his orders. In a very few minutes, therefore, Captain Ten Eyck, with another relief party

consisting of the last man available, was on the run to the scene, with wagons and ambulances trundling after them. Even the prisoners were placed on duty. Couriers raced to the wood train to secure their safety and support, leaving only one hundred and nineteen men in the fort to defend it. Thus the firing recently begun over the hill carried discouragement on its echoes over the fort. Increasing in intensity for about thirty minutes, a few quick volleys and the rattle of file-firing, were followed by a few random shots, and a sickening silence, as Captain Ten Eyck passed out of sight over the ridge. The pickets could give no information to relieve the anxiety at the fort. Suddenly Orderly Sample came racing back reporting the valleys beyond to be full of Indians, and that several hundred were on the road below yelling and challenging the whites to come on, though Captain Fetterman was not in sight.

It happened that that same howling band of maddened devils was then on the very field of carnage red-dened by the blood of Fetterman and his men. "It was dark when Captain Ten Eyck returned with forty-nine of the bodies, and made the terrible announcement that all were killed" (78). The timber train returned, having repulsed their own attack, and seen nothing of Fetterman. On the morning of the 22d, Colonel Carrington headed a party to bring in the rest of the bodies, which were found with no little difficulty scattered over a wide area. They returned about dusk with the last body in the wagons. "Captains Fetterman and Brown were (found) at the point nearest the fort, each with a revolver shot in the left temple, and so scorched with powder as to leave no doubt that they shot each other when hope had fled" (78).

These intrepid captains together, displaying more enthusiasm than wisdom, had previously planned an expedition of a week's trip to Tongue River valley with a mixed party of ninety citizens and soldiers, to destroy the Indian villages and clear out all enemies. But here were eighty-one officers and men destroyed only six or seven miles on the route to Tongue River! On leaving the fort that morning, Colonel Carrington planning for the worst,

arranged the fuses in the ammunition storage, and gave such orders as would destroy the post and its last inhabitant, in case the Indians should approach in overwhelming numbers, after they had slain the rest of the troops outside.

"This massacre proved the value and integrity of Major Bridger and his statements, and no less showed the wisdom of a settled policy not to precipitate or undertake a general war while there was but a handful of men at the post" (78).

It was a solemn occasion when the slain were lowered into a great pit fifty feet in length and seven feet wide and seven feet deep; and the mound that rose above it became in effect a memorial to the wise warnings of Bridger to the officers and men for their own guidance, and for the guidance of the department commanders who assigned the troops and gave orders, and shipped the arms and ammunition. It likewise lent an emphasis to the appeals often made by Colonel Carrington for a larger garrison.

While the burial trench was forming, a solitary messenger, John Phillips, was fleeing on horseflesh to the telegraph line on the Platte road with Colonel Carrington's dispatches reporting the disaster, and begging for at least two well armed companies of cavalry and four companies of infantry forthwith. These troops were sent promptly about as requested, the frightful casualty list serving to arouse the country at large as it had not been moved before.

The new troops arrived at Fort Phil Kearney on January 17, 1867, bringing with them the orders to Colonel Carrington to transfer his headquarters to Fort Caspar. Owing to the bitterly cold weather moving preparations were very difficult, but on the 23d the Carrington caravan moved southward. Heavy snow added to the little company's griefs, though with an evening's rest the march was resumed soon after midnight that night, in an effort to elude the Indians.

"At one o'clock (a. m. January 24, 1867) the bugle sounded, and by three o'clock we were again in motion

under the lead of Baily, our intrepid guide. Bridger, old and infirm, had been left behind" (70). Writing of that frontier experience many years afterward, Mrs. Carrington says: "It was my good fortune to meet with old Jim Bridger; . . . and his biography, if written, would make a ponderous volume of tragic and startling events. Although uneducated, he spoke both Spanish and English, as well as many Indian tongues; and his genial manners and simplicity of bearing commanded respect, as well as the attachment and confidence, of all who knew him."

Isolated as they were that winter at Fort Phil Kearney from food supplies suitable for the men of the garrison, the entire command of troopers were thrown into a general debility attending a scourge of scurvy, having been reduced to the fare of the Indian and the trapper which only such men as Bridger could meet day after day with no ill effects. The garrison was therefore in comparatively dire circumstances before the springtime opened the roads and let the fresh food supplies flow in again.

The prolonged cold weather did, however, have the favorable effect of keeping the Indians comparatively quiet, though if they had known it they could have easily taken both Forts C. F. Smith and Phil Kearney because of the state of the fighting power of the garrisons. Communication was resumed in the spring with Fort Laramie and Virginia City, and the Bozeman trail was again opened for emigrants, under military escort where possible, though most of the trains were required to bunch together and defend themselves.

Max Littman, sergeant, Twenty-seventh U. S. Infantry, who went to Fort Phil Kearney in the spring of 1867, and remained until the post was abandoned in the summer of 1868, says (40): "I knew old Jim Bridger, the famous scout and guide, very well, as he was the government guide for our battalion. He was at that time dressed in buckskin clothing. He was five feet ten or eleven inches tall, of slim build, and was then sixty-two years of age. When one looked into his eyes they were wonderfully keen, and he could turn them down almost to a

bead. He was silent when scouting, and knew every Indian sign and indication of the surrounding foe."

Littman was also a participant in the famous Wagon Box fight, which occurred on August 2, 1867, near the site of the Fetterman Massacre, and only a few miles from Fort Phil Kearney. Bridger was not actually engaged in the principal part of this affair, though he is understood to have been at the fort, and may have been among those who rushed to the scene when scouts brought reports of the battle.

About the middle of July, 1867, a bull train laden with arms, ammunition and general supplies for Fort Phil Kearney, reached the post and was engaged for a few weeks to supply the post with wood for the coming winter, and with certain specification timbers for some further construction work at the post. A heavy guard attended the timber crews, and up to August 1 no Indians had been seen in significant activities. The encampment, on a plain where a general view of all approaches was afforded, yet very near the Pinery and near a stream, was formed within a corral of the empty wagon boxes from the wagons used in logging. Fourteen of these ordinary wooden boxes were placed in a large oval, with openings between them.

Early on the morning of August 2 one timber train departed for Fort Phil Kearney with loads of finished timbers and logs, while another train departed for the Pinery, both under heavy escort, leaving only twenty-five soldiers and seven civilians at the Wagon Box corral to guard the supplies and the ammunition stores and extra arms and equipment. Almost simultaneously with the disappearance of the two trains out of sight, the cry of "Indians" was verified by two or three lines of Indians galloping single file toward the corral. The next instant it seemed as if the Indians were coming in droves.

The wildly riding red men were dressed only in the regulation G-string and moccasins, plus war bonnets of varying patterns. The Indians' bodies were gaudily painted with white, green and yellow war paints. Ahead of the approaching horde were three whites, who had

been dislodged from their picket posts a half mile distant. Major J. W. Powell, the commanding officer, was bathing in the creek, but reached the wagon box enclosure in ample time to order the placing of the arms and ammunition, and assign the fighting forces to their places.

The bull train had brought from Fort Laramie a large number of Springfield repeating rifles, with abundant quantities of ammunition for them, and the corral was fortunately supplied with a goodly quantity of both. The Indians had been chastized with the howitzer, a-gun-that-shoots-twice as they called it, but they did not know of the existence of these new inexhaustible weapons. Thus they approached under the conviction that there must be a certain lapse of time after each fire for reloading, as was the case with the few guns their own warriors carried.

The wagon boxes were ordinary thin pine boxes of the usual prairie schooner type, offering only a hiding place, and not a bullet proof barricade. Ox yokes and merchandise boxes and barrels were quickly stacked as barricades for a few marksmen, while the remainder of the men crouched inside or behind the wagon boxes. Like crazed hornets the masses of Indians raced forward slowly in tangled circles for a time, when suddenly they straightened their courses and charged directly forward to take the fort.

The view was said to be alive with Indians, but the handful of soldiers took steady aim by resting their rifles on the edges of the wagon boxes, and began picking off their targets while yet many rods distant. Circling again as they came closer, the Indians discharged their guns and shot their arrows in great numbers, but with reckless aim. And as they circled nearer both warriors and ponies were piled up as dead and wounded in great confusion. Each volley from the wagon boxes brought the savages surging forward, expecting a respite, only to be mowed down mercilessly.

A daring warrior would occasionally race obliquely forward, dangling from the far side of his pony, with only an arm and a leg visible, but would dextrously dis-

charge his steel tipped arrow over the withers or under the neck of his mount. Equally daring and dextrous was the work of retrieving the fallen warriors. Two Indians would race together, and without slowing up their speed greatly, would select their man wounded or dead, then grasp him by ankle or wrist or both, and bear him away to safety.

Meeting disastrous defeat before the repeating rifles, the Indians soon changed their tactics, and crept like lizards up the far side of a low hill about seventy-five yards distant, revealing only their war bonnets, their faces, and perhaps their weapons when being discharged. At this time the casualties began to grow within the corral. One brave took a position in a gulley or low place, below range for himself or those shooting at him; but he leaped high into the air at each arrow, releasing it from his powerful bow at the top of his leap, sending the missile dangerously near a wagon box marksman, who finally reached his target first.

The day advanced and grew very warm, the sun beating pitilessly on the men huddled about the wagon boxes. The water supply was short, and soon the only water available was outside the corral in containers that had become leaky with bullet holes. Fire-brand arrows had set fire to the hay in the corral, making a suffocating smudge and heat; and the rifles became hot from rapid firing to add to the distress of the men.

About this time a closely compacted mass of naked savages on foot came crowding up a ravine from an unexpected quarter. So close did they get before being repulsed that bullets from the Springfields were believed to have often passed through two or more Indians' bodies at once. Red Cloud, the proud chief, was seen on a knoll with his advisers a half mile distant. But he was evidently nonplussed at the inability of his men to carry out his orders; thus soon after noon a scattering of the warriors was observed, followed promptly by the booming of the friendly howitzer, and the appearance of heavy reinforcements from Fort Phil Kearney.

Only three bodies were taken from the corral to the

ambulances, representing the total dead, and there were only two or three wounded; but Red Cloud told General Dodge some years later that the Indian dead and wounded numbered eleven hundred and thirty-seven; and Chief Rain-in-the-Face refused to discuss the dreadful subject of the wagon box fight.

This massacre of the Indians served to quiet the red men along the Bozeman trail for a time, reducing their operations to minor attacks on small, isolated parties; though the railroad construction men, who that year had laid the steel rails into Cheyenne, were given more or less trouble by other bands of Sioux and Cheyennes. Thus while we have not been able to see Bridger in action, there is good reason to believe that in spite of his growing debility, he had a busy season around Fort Phil Kearney during 1867.

Ostrander (85) says Bridger was still there when Ostrander's party departed April 23, but that he was troubled some with rheumatism and his movements hampered. He seems to have busied himself observing the activities of hostile Indians and acting as intermediary between the soldiery and the Indians, who called at the post to trade furs for merchandise.

CHAPTER LVIII

BRIDGER'S EXIT FROM THE MOUNTAINS

THE Indians fought desperately for their favorite hunting grounds, and for their own natural home; and the struggle was a slow but dismal failure in the end. Likewise James Bridger fought off failing health and a pitiful darkening of his far famed eyesight, along with the changing conditions brought by the march of civilization; for these subtle but powerful influences gradually stole upon him to wrest from him forever his beloved West, the plains, the rivers, and the Rocky Mountains which he knew and loved so well.

With the approach of winter at Fort Phil Kearney, and the almost total suspension of traffic on the Bozeman trail, Bridger secured a leave of absence and journeyed to Fort Laramie in October, 1867, to rest and recuperate his health. He spent the winter with friends at the old post, and on May 15, 1868, he was restored to duty at \$5 a day as guide. Since 1867 most of the Montana traffic had been by way of the railroad, the Overland route, and Idaho, reaching Virginia City from the south; and this fact, combined with the undoubted Indian supremacy on the Bozeman trail, brought the official order to abandon the military posts on the trail.

On May 22 Bridger was transferred from Major E. B. Grimes, assistant quartermaster at Fort Laramie, to Lieut. P. F. Barnard of the Fourth Infantry, whom he guided on the journey to remove the property from the forts on the Bozeman trail, to Medicine Bow and Fort Fred Steele on the Platte River. When this detail was accomplished, which was at one trip, since there were a large number of freight trains engaged, Bridger was transferred to Colonel Darling, assistant quartermaster at Fort D. A. Russell, the new post at Cheyenne, "and by him paid and discharged." Thus laconically ends the official record, which terminates forever the government scouting service of the old plainsman.

The Union Pacific railroad was that year forced over the Black Hills to the west of Cheyenne, and thence across the Laramie Plains and over the continental divide by Gen. Grenville M. Dodge, who had entered the Pacific railway employ and whose acquaintance with the country had been improved and perfected in a large measure by his trusted friend, James Bridger, whom he had often consulted. Colonel Inman (70) tells a fanciful story to illustrate this genuine helpfulness.

"At one time early in the 60's, while the engineers of the proposed Union Pacific railway were temporarily in Denver, then an insignificant mushroom hamlet, they became somewhat confused as to the most practicable point in the range over which to run their line. After debating the question, they determined, upon a suggestion from some of the old settlers, to send for Jim Bridger, who was then visiting in St. Louis. A pass via the overland stage, was inclosed in a letter to him, and he was urged to start for Denver at once, though nothing of the business for which his presence was required was told him in the text.

"In about two weeks the old man arrived, and the next morning after he had rested, asked why he had been sent for from such a distance. The engineers then began to explain their dilemma. The old mountaineer waited patiently until they had finished, when, with a look of disgust on his weathered countenance, he demanded a large piece of paper, remarking at the same time—'I could 'a' told you fellers all that in St. Louis, and saved you the expense of bringing me out here.'

"He was handed a sheet of manila paper, used for drawing the details of Bridge plans. The veteran pathfinder spread it on the ground before him, took a dead coal from the ashes of the fire, drew a rough outline map, and pointing to a certain peak just visible on the serrated horizon, said: 'There's where you fellers can cross with your road, and nowhere else, without more diggin' an' cuttin' than you think of.' That crude map is preserved, I have been told, in the archives of the great corporation, and its line crosses the main spurs of the Rocky Mountains, just where Bridger said it could with the least work."

But the story, though much told in the old scout's behalf, is not true. General Dodge told E. L. Sabin (79) that no such map exists, and that no such incident occurred, at least not in that precise manner, though the old scout's assistance in a general way was always acknowledged.

Bridger's former associate, Robert Campbell, the founder of Fort Laramie (called Fort William at first), as an old gray-haired man, visited Fort Laramie in the summer of 1868 for the last time,

his farewell trip being simultaneous with the farewell of James Bridger to the mountains. Campbell gave a reception to the old plainsmen of his acquaintance it is said (18), and we are led to believe that Bridger was in attendance at this farewell party, though we are forced to forego an insight into this reminiscent gathering with almost as much regret as both Bridger and Campbell must have felt on thus reaching the end of their mountain careers.

F. G. Burnett, who was in the employ of the sutler who maintained establishments at Forts Reno, Phil Kearney, and C. F. Smith, was on duty at those posts in the summer of 1867, and he pays a tribute to Bridger whose plains days were then being numbered (40).

"Jim Bridger was a remarkable old man and had a wonderful memory. He seemed never to forget a trail that he had ever traveled, or the distance between streams or watering places, whether good water or bad, and also whether there was wood, and if there was good feed for the stock. So we always knew what sort of a camp the one ahead would be, and what kind of country we would have to travel over in order to reach it.

"His eyesight was failing when I knew him, so that he could not shoot very good, and he would always swear at us if we got a shot at an Indian and missed him, remarking that he never missed one when he was our age. He was devoid of fear and rarely talked of his exploits, and history has lost many a thrilling adventure by his indifference to publicity. He was a great friend of Chief Washakie of the Shoshones. They were about the same age, and had many hair raising experiences together. If he was cornered and asked to talk, he would tell the most outlandish yarns and then chuckle to himself and wonder if his questioner had gotten what he wanted."

John Hunton, resident trader at Fort Laramie for many years, says: "I became acquainted with Jim Bridger about the middle of October, 1867, when he was transferred to Fort Laramie, having been given a layoff to recuperate his enfeebled condition. Seth E. Ward was the post sutler here at that time and Col. W. G. Bullock was his general manager. I was one of six employees. Three of us employees, John Boyd, Hopkins Clark, and myself, occupied the bunk room in the sutler's store, and Bridger was given a bunk in the same room. Here he remained, occupying the room with us most of the time, until about the middle of April, 1868.

"He made two or three trips to Cheyenne and Fort D. A. Russell, during the time he was here, but I do not think he was absent at any time to exceed ten days. He seemed to prefer to be around here, and to be alone, or with some one or two persons who did not annoy him by constant questions. Sometimes he seemed to like to talk, and always made a good listener when the subject of conversation interested or pleased him. When it did not, he always curled his upper lip with a sneer and left the audience. He told

me many times he did not like to sacrifice his feelings, intelligence or personal pleasure, 'when it was such an easy matter to walk away from a damn fool talking.' I have more than once seen him walk away from a group of army officers in the officers' club room (where he was always a welcome guest) because some officer would comment on something or somebody when Bridger would think the comment was made in ignorance or malice. From an educational standpoint he was ignorant, not knowing how to either read or write. . . .

"He said he was first at Fort Laramie in his teens, but did not know or remember the exact year; that he spent the winter that old man Laramie was killed, down at the Fort, and around here, and was one of the party who went out to search for Laramie when he did not come back in the spring as he said he would; that the party went up the Laramie valley, searching it and all its tributaries; that they found an unfinished cottonwood log cabin on the north side of the river below the mouth of Sabille Creek, and one broken beaver trap near it, but 'no Laramie.' He said that he learned some two years later from the Arapahoe Indians that some of the tribe had killed Laramie, and put his body under the ice in a beaver dam. . . . I saw him (Bridger) in Cheyenne about the latter part of August, 1868, for the last time, and then for only a few minutes. He was at that time in rather feeble health" (40).

Gilbert Ellis Bailey, in the *Los Angeles Daily Times*, April 16, 1924, says in part: "I knew Jim Bridger personally. I first met him in the late sixties. He gave me much information about the geography of Wyoming, which I found remarkably accurate when I became Territorial Geologist, 1884-1888. He would take a stick and draw a map in the sand or clay that was correct in every detail. While drawing he might stop and ask a question of some Shoshone and get a nod or a grunt in reply; or get some detail confirmed by asking a question in the sign language and getting a reply in the same manner."

"His tall form seemed lank and thin, not short and heavy set; but his arms were well muscled, and there was great strength in them. His face was bronzed with years of exposure to all kinds of weather. His originally brown hair showed the effects of alkali dust and water. The eyes were gray, not large, but keen and piercing. His face seemed square-like, with a short cropped beard, and to me there was a suggestion of the face of General Grant. There were sternness and determination to struggle on in the compressed lips. He was independent and sometimes gruff to those who annoyed him; but he was the soul of generosity and full of noble impulses to those whom he could help in any way."

Mr. Coutant, who had much first hand information, and knew many of Bridger's contemporaries as well, says of the celebrated frontiersman (18): "James Bridger has been called the Daniel Boone of the Rockies, but this does not do him justice. Boone was simply a courageous Indian fighter, a hunter of renown in a com-

paratively level country. True, though there were dense forests and numerous lurking foes, the difficulties in no way compared with those Bridger had to encounter. He and his band of trappers were daily exposed in open ground. The Indians knew their whereabouts at all times, because the valleys in the Rocky Mountains were devoid of timber, and through these the streams flowed where the beaver were to be found. These same streams came out of rocky recesses in the mountains, covered on either side with a dense growth of cedar, pine and other timber, where the savages lurked in ambush, because they knew the hunters, once on a stream, would follow it to its source. Narrow passes led from one valley to another, and here again the wild men of the mountains watched to hurl a shower of arrows at the lonely trappers, and if they escaped these pitfalls along their path, their camp at night was surrounded by a savage horde awaiting an opportunity to deal death and destruction to the tired sleepers. Trapping grounds lay wide apart and to go from one to another required long marches, every mile of the way exposed to dangers seen and unseen. The country was subject to seasons of intense cold, and this was even more dangerous than the encounters with the savages. In short, Bridger's life was one of constant peril and he met all with a courage sublime; therefore, I say, Daniel Boone who lives in hundreds of tales of the border, and who has been made many times a hero by the pen which tells the story of border life in border days so eloquently, never was called upon to suffer the privations or to meet the dangers which fell to the lot of the hero of the Rockies, James Bridger."

CHAPTER LIX

BRIDGER'S DECLINING YEARS

ONLY a brief visit with the family at Westport in the late summer of 1868 was allowed before Bridger was called temporarily to Fort Hays, Kansas, in consultation with General P. H. Sheridan, who was embarking on an important winter campaign against the Indians in the Southwest. "The end of October (1868) saw completed the most of my arrangements for the winter campaign," says the General (81), "though the difficulties and hardships to be encountered had led several experienced officers of the army, and some frontiersmen, like Mr. James Bridger, the famous scout and guide of earlier days, to discourage the project. Bridger even went so far as to come out from St. Louis to dissuade me, but I reasoned that as the soldier was much better fed and clothed than the Indian, I had one great advantage, and that, in short, a successful campaign could be made if the operation of the different columns were energetically conducted.

"To see to this I decided to go in person with the main column which was to push down into the western part of the Indian Territory, having for its initial objective the villages which, at the beginning of hostilities, had fled toward the headwaters of the Red River. . . . We started from Fort Hays on the 15th of November, and the first night out a blizzard struck us and carried away our tents: and as the gale was so violent that they could not be put up again, the rain and snow drenched us to the skin. Shivering from wet and cold, I took refuge under a wagon, and there spent such a miserable night that, when at last morning came, the gloomy predictions of old man Bridger and others rose up before me with greatly increased force. As we took the road the sleet and snow were still falling, but we labored on to Dodge that day in spite of the fact that many of the mules played out on the way."

Bridger turned back toward the Missouri River, evidently for the last time, having seen California Joe and other younger guides take his place at the head of the column of troops. The minor trail marks, and Indian sign, as well as the sights on his rifle were growing dim, though he could see quite distinctly the coming development in the West; and he also saw that his own place was back on the farm among his grown children, in whose care he might be left when he could no longer take care of himself.

His longing heart and a greatly reduced income caused the old scout in the summer of 1869 to make some inquiry, and later to begin an action, to realize on his interests at Fort Bridger. The ten-year lease to the army had been overdue two years and no moneys had been paid him either as rentals or purchase sums. The following correspondence (52) is therefore presented as of interest here.

WESTPORT, Mo., *August 21, 1869.*

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir: I would most respectfully apply to be informed what disposition the government of the United States intends to make of Fort Bridger, which fort and grounds I have leased to the government in the year 1857 for the term of ten years at the rate of \$600 per annum, with the privilege to purchase it at the expiration of said lease for the sum of \$10,000.

I would also respectfully apply to cause the rents accrued thereon to be remitted to me.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

JAMES BRIDGER,
Per A. Wachsman.

WESTPORT, Mo., *January 6, 1870.*

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir: I have the honor to represent to you most respectfully that in the year 1857 I have leased to the government of the United States my fort (Fort Bridger, D. T.), at the following terms:

The lease was for a term of ten years at the rate of \$600 per annum; also that after the expiration of said ten years the government may, at its pleasure, purchase said fort and ground for the sum of \$10,000. But in case the government should not desire to make such purchase, it shall give to me peaceful possession of said fort and grounds with all improvements thereon. I would therefore most respectfully apply for information what disposition the government intends to make concerning this matter.

Hoping to be favored with an early answer I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES BRIDGER,
Per A. Wachsman.

Address, Westport Postoffice, Missouri.

The officials of the War Department investigated and the papers were "Respectfully returned to the honorable Secretary of War, together with copy of the lease herein referred to. Mr. Bridger has never established his title to the premises. It does not appear from the records of this office that the tract of land was ever taken up on any officers' Form 2, or that rent has ever been paid therefor under said lease. A military reservation at this post was ordered by the president July 14, 1859."

M. C. MEIGS,
Quartermaster-General, April 19, 1870.

WAR DEPARTMENT
Bureau of Military Justice, April 23, 1870.

Respectfully returned to the Secretary of War.

It can only be advised in this case that Mr. Bridger (who represents himself as ignorant of the intentions of the government in regard to this property) shall be forthwith notified to furnish an exhibit of his title to the land (as required in the lease as a condition precedent to his receiving payment of rent therefor), with the understanding that, upon his title being approved as perfect by the Attorney General, the executive department of the government will, if authorized by Congress, proceed to complete the transaction.

It is further recommended, therefore, that such proof of title as is furnished by Bridger be submitted at once to the Attorney General for his opinion and further, that if the title be found complete, Congress be appealed to for the authority necessary to enable the Secretary of War to purchase the property; or, if the purchase is not proposed, for an appropriation of a sufficient amount to satisfy all rents which may be due Bridger under the lease.

J. HOLT, *Judge-Advocate-General.*



MRS. VIRGINIA BRIDGER HAHN (formerly Mrs. Wachsmann), only living child of James Bridger. Born of a Ute mother at Fort Bridger, July 4, 1849. Now residing (October, 1924) on the old Bridger farm at Dallas, Mo., Kansas City suburb.

WAR DEPARTMENT

Washington City, April 25, 1870.

HON. R. T. VAN HORNE,
Member of Congress.

Sir: The Secretary of War directs me to return to you the accompanying letter of James Bridger, esq., of Missouri, relative to the lease of Fort Bridger, Dak., and to inform you that whenever, as required by the agreement between himself and the United States, Mr. Bridger shall produce evidence of his title to the site of that military post, and the Attorney General of the United States shall declare the title so exhibited to be perfect, this department will be prepared to carry into effect, in good faith, the agreement made with Mr. Bridger, by the military authorities in the year 1857. Very respectfully, etc.,

ED. SCHRIVER, *Inspector-General.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

GENERAL LAND OFFICE

Washington, D. C., December 14, 1872.

ADJUTANT GENERAL,

E. D. Townsend, U. S. Army.

Sir: I am in receipt, by reference from you the 12th instant, of a letter from Henry N. Blake, attorney, to the honorable Secretary of War, dated 30th October last, inquiring if the United States ever leased Fort Bridger, Utah, for twenty years or any other term, from William C. Brown.

In reply I have to state that there is nothing on file in this office showing that any lease of Fort Bridger, or any part thereof, was ever made with Mr. Brown, his name not even appearing in a plat of survey filed in this office in 1854 by James Bridger, who claimed in accordance with said private survey, executed by J. M. Hockaday.

This office has never recognized any private claims in the vicinity of Fort Bridger.

Should any claim have existed in that locality under the treaty of 1848 with Mexico there is no law for their adjustment.

No knowledge of any such claim has ever been presented to this office. The territory not being organized at the time of the original military reservation, there was no way by which any other title could have been obtained. Mr. B's letter herewith returned.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WILLIS DRUMMOND, *Commissioner.*

NEAR NEW SANTA FE

Jackson County, Mo., October 27, 1873.

GENERAL B. F. BUTLER,

United States Senator.

Dear General: With the advice of some of my friends, and having myself every conceivable confidence in your ability and

sense of justice, I would most respectfully beg leave to address you with the view of soliciting your valuable influence and assistance in the prosecution of my rightful claim against our Government regarding my property, Fort Bridger, Wyo., begging that you will have the kindness to undertake the prosecution and collection of said claim in the manner you may deem best.

You are probably aware that I am one of the earliest and oldest explorers and trappers of the great West now alive. Many years prior to the Mexican War, the time Fort Bridger, with adjoining territories, became the property of the United States, and for ten years thereafter (1857), I was in peaceable possession of my old trading post, Fort Bridger, occupied it as such, and resided thereat, a fact well known to the Government, as well as the public in general.

Shortly before the so-called Utah Expedition, and before the Government troops under General A. S. Johnston arrived near Salt Lake City, I was robbed, and threatened with death, by the Mormons, by the direction of Brigham Young, of all my merchandise, stock—in fact of everything I possessed, amounting to more than \$100,000 worth—the building in the Fort partially destroyed by fire, and I barely escaped with my life.

I was with and piloted the army under said General Johnston out there, and since on the approach of winter no convenient shelter for the troops and stock could be found in the vicinity of Salt Lake, I tendered to them my so-called Fort (Fort Bridger) with the adjoining shelter, affording rally for winter quarters. My offer being accepted, a written contract was entered into between myself and Captain Dickerson, of the Quartermaster's Department, in behalf of the United States, approved by General A. S. Johnston, and more, so signed by various officers on the General's staff, such as Maj. Fitz-John Porter; Drs. Maddison, Mills, and Bailey; Lieutenant Rich, Colonel Weight, and others, a copy of which is now on file in the War Department at Washington. I also was furnished with a copy thereof, which was unfortunately destroyed during the war.

But the following were the terms agreed upon, in said contract:

The Government was to have possession of said Fort and grounds for a term of ten years, paying therefor as rent \$600 per annum; and it was also stipulated that should, at the expiration of said ten years, the Government desire to retain or purchase said Fort and grounds, it was at liberty to do so by paying me the sum of \$10,000 in gold outside of the yearly rent.

Shortly after the expiration of the terms of said lease I applied to the Secretary of War for information in regard to the intentions of the Government in regard to my fort, whether they intended to keep or retain it, and also for the rent due me and remaining unpaid. In reply I was informed that whenever I could establish

to the satisfaction of the War Department my title to said Fort and grounds Department would comply with its contract.

Now, although I was authorized to establish my Fort there and settle Salt Lake valley, by the governor of Upper California, I have no proper papers to show therefor. But I would respectfully call your attention to the fact that, had I not leased the premises in good faith to the Government, I would now reside thereon, and would surely by this time have perfected my title thereto under the several acts of Congress since passed, from which I was prevented by the Government keeping me out of possession thereof.

Further, I desire to state that the premises were surveyed and located by John M. Hockaday, a Government surveyor; but as it appears, the latter had resigned as such, though I do not know whether his resignation was accepted before or after said survey. A copy of said survey is now on file in the surveyor general's office in Washington.

It is my belief that I could have then easily obtained a patent for said land, had I applied for the same, but owing to the fact that I was all my life out in the mountains, and consequently ignorant what steps were required to be taken to perfect my title to the premises.

I am now getting old and feeble, and am a poor man, and consequently unable to prosecute my claim as it probably should be done. For that reason I respectfully apply to you, with the desire of entrusting the matter into your hands, authorizing you for me, to use such means as you deem proper for the successful prosecution of this claim. I would further state that I have been strictly loyal during the late rebellion, and during the most of the time in the war in the employment of the Government. Trusting confidently that you will do me the favor of taking the matter in hand or furnish me with your advice in regard to the matter, I have the honor, general, to be your most obedient servant,

JAMES BRIDGER.

Bridger's suit was interrupted for about five years after writing the letter to Senator Butler, probably due to ill health and his inability aggressively to prosecute it. His goiter and a rupture annoyed him some, and in 1873 his eyesight began rapidly to fail him, so that by 1874 or early 1875 he was almost totally blind. Even in 1873 he had been able to discern friends only by the sound of their voices.

Mrs. A. F. Wright, 6115 Main Street, is one of the Kansas Citians who cherish recollections of "Jim" Bridger in his latter days (82). She was the daughter of Dr. A. B. Spruill, who owned a farm "across the road"—what is now the Wornall Road—from the Bridger farm, near Dallas. She states that she knew two of Bridger's daughters quite intimately—Mary Bridger and Virginia Bridger, now Mrs. Hahn. "Both Mary and Virginia were good

dancers," said Mrs. Wright, "and Mary taught me my first steps. I was a child of ten or twelve years at that time, and would often go over to see Mr. Bridger. He was always very hospitable and liked to have the children of the neighborhood come to visit him. His eyesight failed him in his latter years, but I shall always remember his kindly blue-gray eyes, and the stories he used to tell us of the plains and the mountains.

"His son, Bill, played the violin, and the whole neighborhood used to come to dances at the Bridger home. I often saw him riding on horseback or walking over his land, feeling his way along with his stick, accompanied by two or three of his fox hounds. If they started a rabbit the old man would get greatly excited and halloo the hounds on to the chase. Often he would sit out on the porch, resting his chin on his cane, with his face towards the West—a lonely figure. He liked to talk of his life on the plains, and I remember his saying once, at a time when his eyesight was almost gone, 'I wish I was back there among the mountains again—you can see so much farther in that country.' Mr. Bridger was very temperate in his habits, and was the soul of hospitality in his own home, and he was very generous. He was proud of his apple orchard and used to send basketfuls of apples to his neighbors."

There are still many living in the vicinity of Bridger's New Santa Fe (or Dallas) farm and in Kansas City, who remember the last days of the old plainsman.

The Bridger farm, consisting of six hundred and forty acres, was crossed by a beautiful stream having a bed-rock bottom, and bordered by graceful slopes set with hardwood trees much of the way. During Bridger's later life he sold a portion of the farm lying west of the stream, and adjoining the Dallas road, to Stubbins Watts, who erected a water-power grist mill on the stream just west of Dallas, now a suburb of Kansas City, Missouri.

Bridger established himself in a little store some distance east of the old mill, on his own land, soon after leaving the plains; but owing to ill health he was not able to attend to these duties much of the time, and was often found about the grist mill, chatting with friends, or sitting on the porch of the Watts residence, immediately west of the mill (behind it in the picture herewith) narrating experiences in the far West. His happiest times were spent in a chair on that porch, where his daughter, Mrs. Hahn, recently posed for the picture shown herewith.

"My father moved from Fort Bridger in 1850," Mrs. Hahn stated to a Kansas City Star Reporter (82), "and came back to Jackson County. He bought the big Thatcher farm three and a half miles east of New or Little Santa Fe, near Dallas. Father had three hundred and seventy-five acres under cultivation, and several hundred more in timber. He was very proud of his orchard.

He built a large frame house on the Dallas farm in the sixties out of material purchased from William Bernard when the latter tore down his first home in Westport, to replace it with a brick structure, which is still standing at 3906 Penn Street. Mr. Bridger also at one time had a fine home in Westport. It was originally built by Colonel A. G. Boone. After the last Mrs. Bridger's death, Mr. and Mrs. George London of Westport kept house for the family, and cared for the children when father made his trips, as he frequently did, back to the West. I was married in this house to Capt. Albert Wachsman, February 25, 1864." Mrs. Hahn's first husband died in 1883 and she married Frank Hahn in 1892. She wrote to General Dodge in part as follows concerning the declining years of the old plainsman (1):

"In 1873 father's health began to fail him, and his eyes were very bad, so that he could not see good, and the only way that father could distinguish any person was by the sound of their voices, but all who had the privilege of knowing him were aware of his wonderful state of health at that time, but later in 1874, father's eyesight was leaving him very bad, and this worried him so much. He has oftentimes wished that he could see you. At times father would get very nervous, and wanted to be on the go. I had to watch after him and lead him around to please him, never still one moment.

"I got father a good old gentle horse, so that he could ride around and to have something to pass away time, so one day he named his old horse 'Ruff.' We also had a dog that went with father; he named this old, faithful dog 'Sultan.' Sometimes father would call me and say: 'I wish you would go and saddle old Ruff for me; I feel like riding around the farm,' and the faithful old dog would go along. Father could not see very well, but the old faithful horse would guide him along, but at times father would draw the lines wrong, and the horse would go wrong, and then they would get lost in the woods. The strange part of it was the old faithful dog, Sultan, would come home and let us know that father was lost. The dog would bark and whine until I would go out and look for him, and lead him and the old horse home on the main road. Sometimes father wanted to take a walk out to the field with old Sultan by his side, and cane in hand to guide his way out to the wheat field, would want to know how high the wheat was, and then father would go down on his knees and reach out his hands to feel for the wheat, and that was the way he passed away his time.

"Father at times wished that he could see, and only have his eyesight back again, so that he could go back out to see the mountains. I know he at times would feel lonesome, and long to see some of his old mountain friends to have a good chat of olden times away back in the fifties. Father often spoke of you, and

would say: 'I wonder if General Dodge is alive or not; I would give anything in the world if I could see some of the old army officers once more, to have a talk with them of olden times, but I know I will not be able to see any of my old time mountain friends any more. I know that my time is near. I feel that my health is failing me very fast, and see that I am not the same man I used to be.' "

Bridger passed away July 17, 1881, and was first buried on private ground, once a part of his own farm, a few rods west of Watts' mill; but his body was removed to Kansas City, Mo., in December, 1904, at the instigation of General Dodge, who erected the memorial monument which was unveiled December 11, 1904. The circumstances are set forth in the General's biographical sketch of Bridger, reproduced in its entirety as a part of this present volume.

Colonel Inman (70) visited the first grave some time before the removal of the body and wrote this paragraph: "The grassy mound, over which there was no stone to record the name of its occupant, covered the remains of the last of his class, a type vanished forever, for the border is a thing of the past; and upon the gentle breeze of that delightful morning, like the droning of bees in a full flowered orchard, was wafted to my ears the hum of Kansas City's civilization, only three or four miles distant, in all of which I was sure there was nothing that would have been congenial to the old frontiersman."

CHAPTER LX

FORT BRIDGER IN THE SEQUEL

JAMES BRIDGER carried to his grave his disappointment at the failure of the government to pay him rentals or purchase price for Fort Bridger. His family, however, aided by capable attorneys and friends, took up the suit where the old scout left off in 1873, and in his name they renewed the claim in January, 1878, as shown by the following letter. The subjoined communications and papers (52) show in brief outline the course of the suit, and its final successful termination nearly eight years after Bridger had joined his Indian wives in the Happy Hunting Grounds.

NEW SANTA FE
Jackson County, Mo., January 12, 1878.

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,
Washington, D. C.

Sir: I would most respectfully apply to be informed of the intention of our Government in regard to my property, Fort Bridger, Wyoming, which I leased to said Government in the year 1857, for a term of years, a copy of such lease being on file in your department. I desire to be informed whether our Government wishes to continue possession thereof; and, if so, I should be pleased to have the rent due thereon, and now in arrear, remitted to me as soon as practicable.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

JAMES BRIDGER.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Washington, D. C., May 17, 1880.

HON. ALEX. RAMSEY,
Secretary of War.

Sir: A claim of James Bridger, now residing in Jackson County, Missouri, for \$10,000 as compensation for the use and occupation, by a portion of the U. S. Army, of Fort Bridger from 1857 to the present time, has been referred to me by the chairman of the Committee (House of Representatives) on Claims for examination and report to the full committee. I inclose an affidavit of E. H. Ripeto as a sample of many which have been filed. Referring to the

original contract of lease by the Government with Mr. Bridger (a copy of which I find with the papers) dated November 18, 1857, now on file in your department, I will be pleased to learn whether the improvements mentioned in the affidavit of Mr. Rippeto were erected by Mr. Bridger at his own expense; whether any compensation has been made to him, and any other facts in the possession of the department, which have a bearing upon the validity of his claim.

Please return with answer the enclosed affidavit.

SAMUEL L. SAWYER.

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE

Washington, May 22, 1880.

Respectfully returned to the Secretary of War, with papers from the files of this office relating to the claim of Mr. James Bridger, and inviting attention to War Department letter to him dated February 21, 1878, from which it will be seen that at that time the department did not recognize his claim to ownership for rent of Fort Bridger.

Nothing appears of record here to show by whom or at whose expense the improvements mentioned in the within affidavit of Mr. Rippeto were erected. The records of the Quartermaster General's office, where the original lease is filed, may furnish additional information upon this point; also as to whether or not any compensation has ever been made to Mr. Bridger in the matter.

In this connection it is remarked that Fort Bridger, which has not been garrisoned for some time, is to be reoccupied.

R. C. DRUM,
Assistant Adjutant General.

WAR DEPARTMENT

Washington City, June 9, 1880.

HON. SAMUEL L. SAWYER,

Committee on Claims, House of Representatives.

Sir: In reply to your letter of the 17th ultimo, requesting information relative to the claim of James Bridger, of Jackson County, Missouri, for compensation for alleged use and occupation by United States troops of Fort Bridger, Wyoming, since November, 1857, I have the honor to inform you that Mr. Bridger was, February 21, 1878, informed that his failure to establish his title to the property in question, previous to its being embraced in a military reservation, precluded the Secretary of War from recognizing his claim to ownership or rent.

A copy of a report of the Quartermaster General is herewith inclosed, which embraces all the information in relation to this claim in the possession of this department and its bureaus.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ALEX. RAMSEY,
Secretary of War.

A BILL FOR THE RELIEF OF JAMES BRIDGER

Be it enacted by the Senate and House Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That James Bridger be, and he is hereby, authorized to commence his suit in the Court of Claims against the United States, at any time within one year after the passage of this act, for the value of the improvements by him erected and constructed at Fort Bridger, situated in Green River County, in the Territory of Utah, and appropriated by the United States to its own use; and the Court of Claims shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine the said claim free from the bar of the statute of limitations; and said claimant and the United States shall have the right to use as evidence before said Court any papers or documents in the War Department in relation to said claim, and any other competent testimony, relative to the claim; and said court shall render judgment in favor of said claimant for the value of said improvements as found by said court.

(Senate Report No. 21, 48th Congress 1st Session 1883.)

A Bill identical with this was favorably reported from the Committee on Claims of the House of Representatives, June 12, 1880. A similar Bill was favorably reported from this Committee July 6, 1882.

The evidence in this case clearly establishes the following facts: About the year 1843 claimant located upon a tract of land situated in Green River County, now Utah Territory, and commenced the erection of a trading house and other buildings and improvements. From the date of said location said claimant resided at said post and engaged in trade with the surrounding tribes of Indians, until in the fall of 1857, at which last mentioned date the improvements constructed by said claimant at said trading post consisted of thirteen spacious and substantial log houses, constructed out of hewed timbers; the roofs and floors were of sawed boards, which were sawed out with whipsaws; the roofs were also covered with sod to render them fireproof. The houses were so located as to form a hollow square in the center of an area of about four thousand square feet, all of which was surrounded with a strong, solid stone wall, laid in cement, about eighteen feet high and five feet thick, with bastions at each corner. Outside of said wall was a strong corral for stock, about two hundred by three hundred feet square, inclosed in like manner by a stone wall laid in cement, about ten feet high and two and one-half or three feet thick, together with six other outhouses. The testimony shows that these improvements were erected by said claimant, and were used by him as his residence and as a trading post, and were called and known as Fort Bridger. In the year 1857 the Army of Utah, commanded by Gen. Albert S. Johnston, took possession of said premises on behalf of the United States, under a written contract of lease executed

by claimant, of the one part and Capt. John H. Dickerson, assistant quartermaster, United States Army, on behalf of the United States, of the other part.

The material portions of said written contract, so far as the claim of said Bridger is concerned, are as follows:

Said claimant leased to the United States for the term of ten years from the 18th day of November, 1857, a tract of land consisting of three thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight acres and two roods, situated in Green River County, Utah Territory, and particularly described in a plot attached to said written contract and made a part thereof, upon which tract of land is situated Fort Bridger. By the terms of said contract the United States agreed to pay to claimant an annual rent for the use of said premises of \$600, the rent to commence as soon as claimant established his title to said tract of land to the satisfaction of the Quartermaster General of the United States, or whenever the Attorney General of the United States should pronounce the title good. It was further agreed by the contracting parties that the United States Government through its agent, should have the privilege at any time within the period of said lease, of purchasing said tract of land by paying claimant the sum of \$10,000. It is also provided by the terms of said contract that said lease might be terminated by the United States upon three months' notice by the Quartermaster General of the United States Army, or by his agent, to claimant.

The United States have continued to occupy said premises from the day of the date of said lease to the present time, and are now enlarging it with a view to its permanent occupancy. The claimant has never established his title to the premises, but on July 14, 1859, less than two years after the date of said contract, the President declared it a military reservation, and that the General Land Office had never recognized any private claims in the vicinity of Fort Bridger; and, further, should any claims have existed in that locality under the treaty of 1848 with Mexico, that no law existed for their adjustment. The testimony further shows that the cost of said improvements, to said claimant, was about the sum of \$20,000.

Claimant believing himself entitled to be paid for the use and occupation of Fort Bridger and the buildings connected therewith, and for the value of said improvements, made application to the War Department therefor, and was informed by a communication from the Secretary of War, dated February 21, 1878, that his failure to establish his title to the property in question, previous to its being declared a military reservation, precluded the Secretary of War from recognizing his claim to ownership or rent.

It may be, and really appears to be, a hardship upon claimant that he should be entirely deprived of the improvements erected by him, and of compensation for their use by the United States for a



STUBBINS WATTS GRIST MILL, at Dallas, Mo., suburb of Kansas City, built on Bridger's Farm, but on land sold to Watts. Bridger held friends' rendezvous at this mill many times during his declining years; his first burial place was in the background to the right of the mill.
View looking southwest.

period of more than twenty years; yet the terms of said written contract clearly preclude him from a recovery according to the forms of law. The evidence upon which this report is founded consists of numerous affidavits, and communications from the War Department, together with a certified copy of the written contract.

Your Committee believe that the ends of justice will be promoted by permitting the claimant to assert his claim in a court of justice, where witness can be subjected to cross examination and the proper tests applied for the ascertainment of a just and equitable determination.

Your Committee therefore recommend that the accompanying bill, as amended, be passed, permitting claimant to sue in the Court of Claims for the amount he believes himself entitled to, free from the bar of the statute of limitations, and that his case be heard by said court and judgment be given by the court in favor of claimant for the value of said improvements as found by the court.

(S. 480, Fiftieth Congress, First Session 1887.)

(A BILL FOR THE RELIEF OF JAMES BRIDGER OR HIS
LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES.)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That James Bridger, or his legal representatives, be, and he is hereby, authorized to commence a suit in the Court of Claims against the United States for the value of the improvements by him erected and constructed at Fort Bridger (and the rent of said premises by the United States Army), situated in Green River County, in the Territory of Utah, and appropriated by the United States to its own use; and the Court of Claims shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine the said claim free from the statute of limitations, and to adjudicate the same upon the basis of justice and equity, and render judgment thereon; and said claimant and the United States shall have the right to use as evidence before said court, any papers or documents in the War Department in relation to said claim, and any other competent testimony relative to the claim; and said court shall render judgment in favor of said claimant for the value of said improvements as found by said court, and from any judgment that may be rendered in said cause either party thereto may appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States: provided, that such appeal shall be taken within sixty days from the rendition of said judgment.

The claim of James Bridger (S. 480, Fiftieth Congress) has been pending in Congress many years, and there were some ten or twelve affidavits on file in the case, which were referred by the Committee on Claims in the House, Forty-eighth Congress, to Hon. Thomas F. Ochiltree, for examination and report, when he lost all of

said affidavits with other papers and the same cannot now be found anywhere. That said affidavits set forth in substance as in said Senate report No. 21, Forty-eighth Congress, First Session, the following facts to-wit: That James Bridger located in Green River County, Utah Territory, in 1843 (where Fort Bridger now stands), and commenced and finished Fort Bridger "which consisted of thirteen spacious and substantial log houses constructed out of hewed timber." "The houses were so located as to form a hollow square in the center of an area four thousand square feet all surrounded with a solid stone wall, laid in cement eighteen feet high and five feet thick, with bastions at each corner. Outside of said wall was a strong corral for stock, about two hundred by three hundred feet square, enclosed in like manner by a stone wall laid in cement, about ten feet high and two and one-half or three feet thick, together with six other outhouses." These last affidavits showed that "these improvements were called and known as Fort Bridger. In the year 1857 the Army of Utah, commanded by General Albert S. Johnston, took possession of said premises on behalf of the United States under a written contract of lease executed by claimant of the one part and Capt. John H. Dickerson, assistant quartermaster U. S. Army, on behalf of the United States, of the other part."

This lease was for ten years from 18th of November, 1857, to include a tract of land three thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight acres, upon which Fort Bridger was situated.

In this instrument the Government was to pay claimant an annual rental of \$600. It was agreed also that during the period of said lease the United States had the privilege of purchasing said land for \$10,000 as soon as title was established or acquired by claimant, which latter was prevented by the President declaring it a military reservation July 14, 1859. That he was further prevented from completing his title because of the loss of his agreement with the governor of Chihuahua, Mexico, who agreed to grant to him near five thousand acres of land in Green River County (including the land where Fort Bridger now stands) in consideration of his planting his colony at said point. The establishment of a military reservation over said lands defeated any rights he might have under the treaty of 1848 with Mexico. The evidence further shows that these improvements cost claimant about \$20,000 and from the statement of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, could not acquire title because there was no way to do so at that date; the Territory was not then effected and no facilities existed for the survey of this land, and hence no possible way for claimant to perfect his title for the various reasons above enumerated.

CHAS. M. CARTER,

Attorney for Claimant, Room 65, Corcoran Building, City.

IN THE MATTER OF THE CLAIM OF JAMES BRIDGER

HONORABLE COMMITTEE ON CLAIMS,

United States Senate:

Under the auspices of the governor of Chihuahua, in 1843, before the Mexican war, Capt. James Bridger was induced under a promise by the government of a large grant of land, to establish a colony in Green River country, Utah, then Mexican territory, which he did at great expense, and erected Fort Bridger for protection against Indians, at a cost of over \$20,000.

Under the Spanish rule he was to plant said colony and retain possession of the country for a term of years before he was to receive the title to that grant.

The Mexican war entirely changed his plans, as under the treaty of 2d February, 1848, his possessions became a part of the United States territory. He then felt easy, as he was protected in all his possessory rights by treaty, and as it was generally understood that the protective policy of the United States (which protected the persons and property of the Spanish and French subjects in the acquisition of Florida and Louisiana) would be also extended over all who came under our flag from Mexico. In this belief he rested contented, as he believed himself under the most liberal and just government on earth. By treaty he became an American citizen without doing a thing on his part. Continuing on in possession of his property, the possession was guaranteed to him by said treaty until, shortly after peace was declared, the Mormon troubles broke out, when his relations were again disturbed by the U. S. Army quartering in his fort in 1857.

Being an illiterate man (as will be seen from making his mark to the lease), these intelligent army officers ingeniously worded the lease of his property to suit alone the interests of the Government, and got possession of a property in which he had put his earnings of a lifetime—his all on earth. Two years after this possession by the army, the President, in violation of the sacred treaties, stipulations, as will be seen hereafter, declared it a military reservation, thus defeating all efforts to complete his title, commenced under the Spanish laws and to be completed under ours.

This ruined him completely; it was his financial death blow, from which he never afterward recovered. He died disheartened, leaving a destitute family, at the lack of good faith on the part of the United States Government.

The fact that the government officers leased this property in question at \$600 per year, and were to pay \$10,000 for it if they purchased, shows that it was regarded as very valuable, and of great use to the army. The strong and well built stone wall, well laid in cement, was eighteen feet high and five feet thick, around an area of one hundred feet square, and was pronounced the

strongest fort of the kind in the West. The transportation of the cement some thousands of miles over a wild country, with which to construct that cemented stone structure, cost alone several thousand dollars. The construction of this fort—the wall alone—in the wilderness, where material was so costly, and so inaccessible, would be reasonably worth, from builders' estimates, \$18,000.

As a former citizen of Mexico he is entitled to have his rights respected and protected by treaty of 2d February, 1848. This treaty, among other things, declares (Art. VIII) that "property of every kind now belonging to Mexicans not established there (in United States) shall be inviolably respected. The present owners, the heirs of those, and all Mexicans who may hereafter acquire said property by contract, shall enjoy with it, guaranty equally ample as if the same belonged to citizens of the United States." Art. IX declares that the Mexicans who * * * shall be incorporated into the Union of the United States "shall be admitted * * * to the enjoyment of all the rights of citizens of the United States according to the principles of the constitution, and in the meantime shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty and property."

It was further stipulated that "all persons whose occupations are for the common subsistence and benefit of mankind shall be allowed to continue their respective employment * * * nor shall their houses or goods be burned or otherwise destroyed, nor their cattle taken from them, nor their fields wasted; * * * but if the necessity arises to take anything from them for the use of such armed force, the same shall be paid for at an equitable price." And that these treaty stipulations (Art. XXII) "are to be as sacredly observed as the most acknowledged obligations under the laws of nature or of nations."

We ask for the protection of the sacred rights of this Mexican subject, that the provisions of this treaty "be sacredly observed."

Under the laws of Mexico, and under its sanction and protection, he erected this fort and planted this colony, and had Mexico retained possession of the country, his agreement with that republic would have been carried out, and he today would be possessed of three thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight acres of land. But by treaty he was made a citizen of the United States, and it is expected that the provisions of the treaty will be carried out if claimant so desires it.

"According to the modern law of war, the conquering state acquires the sovereign and absolute power over the conquered state, but it cannot in any wise, dispose of the private rights of the conquered subjects." (Lawrence's Wheaton Int. Law, 683, Note 207.)

Grotius says that "By the consenting testimony of all ages and nations, good faith ought to be observed toward the enemies."

Bynkershoek holds that every other sort of fraud may be practised toward him, but he "prohibits perfidy." "I allow of any kind of deceit," said he, "perfidy alone excepted; not because anything is unlawful against an enemy, but because when our faith has been plighted to him so far as the promise extends, he ceases to be an enemy." (Wheaton's Int. Law 685, and other authorities.)

The faith of this Government is pledged to protect this conquered subject in all of his rights. All law writers are overwhelmingly in support of this treaty obligation.

"The Constitution declares a treaty to be the law of the land." (Marshall, C. J., 2 Peters, 314.)

In conclusion, under the sacred provisions of that treaty this Government is not only pledged, but bound, to restore to James Bridger and his heirs whatever possessory rights he had under the Spanish laws, to-wit: A patent to that three thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight acres of land where Fort Bridger now stands, which was taken from him in violation of all treaty provisions, the highest law we have. To fail to do so, according to the highest law writers on international law, the nation would be guilty of "perfidy." This land was to have been granted to him by Mexico, and under the provisions of the treaty, this Government is bound to issue a patent to this grant, or pay the value thereof. (Art. IX.) There can be no other construction.

But claimant is moderate in his demands and only asks to have the privilege of suing in the courts for perhaps one-tenth of his legitimate rights under that treaty.

Respectfully submitted,

C. M. CARTER,
Attorney for Claimant.

Washington, D. C., January 12, 1889.

GEN. B. C. CARD,

Deputy Quartermaster General, U. S. Army.

Sir: In answer to yours of the 11th instant, I have to say that it is impossible for me to obtain more definite evidence than that on file relative to the cost of construction of Fort Bridger and its value at the time the U. S. Army took possession in 1857, for the reason that since this claim has been pending before Congress Capt. James Bridger and nearly all of his witnesses have died.

I remain, yours respectfully,

C. M. CARTER.

This report was transmitted to the President pro tempore of the United States Senate by William C. Endicott, Secretary of War, on January 24, 1889, accompanied by the following communications:

WAR DEPARTMENT

Washington City, January 24, 1889.

THE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
United States Senate.

Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Senate resolution of September 14, 1888, directing an investigation of the claim of James Bridger for value of improvements said to have been constructed by him at Fort Bridger, and for rent of property for use of troops in 1857.

In reply I beg to invite attention to the enclosed report, of the 16th instant, and accompanying papers, from the Quartermaster-General, showing the result of his investigation of the above mentioned claim. I concur in his recommendation that an allowance of \$6,000 be made for the improvements, but that no sum be allowed for rental of the land, because the claimant did not own or have any title to the land, and because rent was promised only when his title to it was established.

All the evidence and papers in the case are transmitted herewith.

Very respectfully,

WILLIAM C. ENDICOTT,
Secretary of War.

In view of the foregoing your committee recommend the payment of said sum of \$6,000, as stated in the bill.

Your committee recommend, however, the following amendments:

Strike out the following words in lines four and five of the bill, "James Bridger or his legal representatives," and insert in lieu thereof the words, "the heirs of James Bridger, deceased."

Your committee also recommends that the title of the bill be changed so as to read as follows: "A Bill for the Relief of the Heirs of James Bridger, Deceased," and as so amended, recommend the passage of the bill.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
—OF—
JAMES BRIDGER

MOUNTAINEER
TRAPPER
AND
GUIDE

BY
MAJOR GEN'L GRENVILLE M. DODGE



JAMES BRIDGER, about 1866, from the only known portrait.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
of
JAMES BRIDGER

MOUNTAINEER, TRAPPER
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By
MAJ. GEN'L GRENVILLE M. DODGE

NEW YORK
UNZ & COMPANY

1905



MONUMENT TO JAMES BRIDGER

Erected at Mount Washington Cemetery, Kansas City, Mo.
Unveiled December 11, 1904. (1)

PREFACE

I WAS induced to erect this monument to James Bridger, and write a brief biographical sketch of his life from the fact that most of the noted mountain men of his day have had their lives written up, while he, the most distinguished of them all, seems to have been neglected. I have waited a long time thinking that some of the noted writers who have made a study of the history of the country west of the Missouri River, and who have necessarily found much data relating to Bridger, would write a full history of his life, but I learned two or three years ago that after he returned from the plains he had died and been buried on his farm, and that his grave was neglected and almost forgotten. Through the efforts of Capt. John B. Colton, the Mount Washington Cemetery Company of Kansas City donated a beautiful and prominent burial site, and Captain Colton moved Bridger's remains to it. During the last year the monument was constructed under my direction by Mr. M. H. Rice, of Kansas City, Mo., and on December 11, 1904, it was unveiled by Bridger's great-granddaughter, Marie Louise Lightle, and my sketch was read at the unveiling by my secretary, Mr. W. N. Jones. I still trust somebody will take up the matter and give us a complete history of Bridger and his mountain comrades, and the remarkable and stirring events of their time. It would be not only interesting reading, but it would add valuable data to the history of our country. Capt. Henry M. Chittenden, Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, in his books, entitled "The Yellowstone Park" and "The American Fur Trade," and other United States officers and explorers, in their reports upon their explorations in the mountains and on the plains, have gathered a great deal of valuable information in relation to Bridger, and this has been of much aid to me

in fixing dates and events of which I had no personal knowledge.

Only persons having met these mountain pioneers, and seen their work, can appreciate what they have done for this country, with what ability and industry they pursued their work, and the record of it should be preserved for future generations.

GRENVILLE M. DODGE.



FORT BRIDGER

As sketched in 1867 by General G. M. Dodge. (1) (Panorama bisected; flagpole and barracks above, stables and corral below.)

JAMES BRIDGER

AT this late day it is a very difficult undertaking to attempt to write a connected history of a man who spent a long life on the plains and in the mountains, performing deeds and rendering services of inestimable value to this country, but who, withal, was so modest that he has not bequeathed to his descendants one written word concerning the stirring events which filled his active and useful life.

It is both a duty and a pleasure to make public such information as I possess and have been able to gather concerning James Bridger, and it is eminently proper and appropriate that this information should be published at the time when his remains are removed to the beautiful spot where they will forever rest, and a simple monument erected that posterity may know something of the remarkable man whose body lies beside it.

James Bridger was born in Richmond, Virginia, March 17, 1804. He was the son of James and Schloe (*sic*) Bridger. The father at one time kept a hotel in Richmond, and also had a large farm in Virginia. In 1812 he emigrated to St. Louis and settled on Six Mile Prairie. He was a surveyor, working in St. Louis and Illinois. His business kept him continually from home, and when his wife died in 1816 he was away from home at the time, and three little children were left alone. One, a son, soon died, the second—a daughter, and the third—the subject of this sketch. The father had a sister, who took charge of the children and farm. In the fall of 1817 the father died, leaving the two children entirely alone with their aunt on the farm. They were of Scotch descent. Their father's sister married John Tyler, who was afterwards President of the United States, and was, therefore, uncle by marriage to James Bridger.³⁰

30. John Hunton told Coutant (18): "Bridger claimed that his mother was Dorothy Tyler, a sister of President John Tyler, and that she was disowned for marrying his father." Hunton is quoted by others (40) con-

After the death of his father and mother, Bridger had to support himself and sister. He got together money enough to buy a flatboat ferry, and when ten³¹ years of age made a living by running that ferry to St. Louis. When he was thirteen years old he was apprenticed to Phil Cromer (*sic*) to learn the blacksmith's trade. Becoming tired of this, in 1822 he hired out to a party of trappers under General Ashley, who were en route to the mountains. As a boy he was shrewd, had keen faculties of observation, and said when he went with the trappers that the money he earned would go to his sister.

The Rocky Mountain Fur Company was organized by General W. H. Ashley in 1822 and commanded by Andrew Henry. It left St. Louis in April, 1822, and it was with this party that Bridger enlisted.

Andrew Henry moved to the mouth of the Yellowstone, going by the Missouri River. They lost one of their boats which was loaded with goods worth \$10,000, and while his land force was moving up parallel with his boats the Indians, under the guise of friendship, obtained his horses. This forced him to halt and build a fort for the winter at the mouth of the Yellowstone, and they trapped and explored in this locality until the spring of 1823.

Ashley, having returned to St. Louis in the fall of 1822, arrived with his second expedition in front of the Aricara villages on May 10, 1823, where he was defeated in battle by the Indians, losing one-half his men, his horses and baggage. He then sent a courier across country to Henry, who went down the Missouri River with his force, and joined Ashley near the mouth of the Cheyenne. The United States forces under General Atkinson³² were then coming up the Missouri Valley to quell the Indian

cerning Bridger: "He said his mother's name before marriage was Tyler, of the President Tyler family." General Dodge's statement about President Tyler's wife is not substantiated by Tyler's biographer; Tyler married Miss Letitia Christian, March 29, 1813. She died in the White House, Sept. 9, 1842. He married Miss Julia Gardiner in the White House, June 26, 1844, and she outlived him several years.

31. This was nearly fourteen years after Bridger's birth.

32. Should be Col. Henry Leavenworth, in command at Fort Atkinson.

troubles, and Ashley and Henry expected to remain and meet them, and their party joined this force under Colonel Leavenworth.

After this campaign was over, Henry, with eighty men, including Bridger, moved in August, 1823, to his fort at the mouth of Yellowstone, and in crossing the country lost two men in a fight with the Indians. He arrived at the fort August 23, 1823, and found that twenty-two of his horses had been stolen by the Indians. He abandoned the fort, and moved by the Yellowstone to near the mouth of the Powder River. Meeting a band of Crows, he purchased forty-seven horses. He then divided his party, placing one part under Etienne Prevost, a noted trapper and trader. In the autumn of 1823 they moved by the Big Horn and Wind rivers to Green River. With this party was Bridger, and no doubt it was this party that late in the fall of 1823 discovered the South Pass. The South Pass is the southern end of the Wind River mountains, and all the country there gives down into a level valley until the Medicine Bow range is reached, some one hundred and fifty miles southeast. It forms a natural depression in the divide of the continent, and it is through this depression that the Union Pacific Railroad was built. This depression is a basin, smaller than Salt Lake, but has no water in it. It is known as the Red Desert, and extends about one hundred miles east and west, and sixty or seventy miles north and south. The east and west rims of this basin make two divides of the continent. In those days the South Pass was known to the trappers in the Wind River valley as the southern route.³³

This party trapped on Wind, Green and other rivers, and in 1823-1824 wintered in Cache valley on Bear River. So far as we have any proof, Bridger was the first man positively known to see Salt Lake. It is claimed that a

33. The General has these facts somewhat mixed. The South Pass is a large roomy saddle or defile a few miles in length across the continental divide, connecting the Sweetwater River and a branch of Little Sandy Creek. The Union Pacific Railroad does not run through the South Pass, but runs about fifty miles to the south across the Red Desert, which General Dodge describes. The South Pass was the route of the emigrants until the railroad was built.

Spanish missionary, Friar Escalante, of Santa Fe, visited the lake in 1776.³⁴ To settle a wager as to the course of Bear River, Bridger followed the stream to Great Salt Lake and found the water salt. He returned to this party and reported what he had learned, and they concluded it was an arm of the Pacific Ocean. In the spring of 1825 [1826-J.C.A.] four men in skin boats explored the shore line, and found it had no outlet.

Andrew Henry was in charge of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company until the fall of 1824, when Jedediah S. Smith took his place, and remained Ashley's partner until 1826. Ashley sold the Rocky Mountain Fur Company to Smith, Jackson and Sublette in July, 1826. Bridger trapped in the interest of these men until 1829, Christopher Carson being with him this year. The winter of 1829-1830 Bridger spent on Powder River with Smith and Jackson, and in April, 1830, went with Smith by the way of Yellowstone to the upper Missouri and to the Judith basin, and then to yearly rendezvous on Wind River, near the mouth of the Porporgie [Popoagie].

Sublette left St. Louis April 10, 1830, with eighty-one men and ten wagons, with five mules to each wagon, and these were the first wagons to be used over what was known as the Oregon trail. They reached the Wind River rendezvous on July 16.

On August 4, 1830, Smith, Jackson and Sublette sold out the company to Milton G. Sublette, Henry Frack [Fraeb], John B. Gervais and James Bridger. The new firm was called the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, and under these people was the only time the company operated under its own name. The trappers divided and occupied different sections of the country. Bridger, with Fitzpatrick and Sublette, took two hundred men, went into the Big Horn basin, crossed the Yellowstone, then north to the great falls of the Missouri, ascended the Missouri to the three forks, went by the Jefferson to the divide, then south several hundred miles to Salt Lake. Here they

34. Silvestre Velez de Escalante did not visit Great Salt Lake, but heard of it while encamped on Utah Lake, sixty miles to the south.

obtained the furs collected by Peter Skeen [Skene] Ogden, of the Hudson Bay Company. They then covered the country to the eastward, and reached the valley of Powder River by the first of winter, traveling in all about twelve hundred miles. Here they spent the winter. It is probable that during this trip Bridger first saw Yellowstone Lake and geysers, and he was probably the first fur trader to make known the wonders of Yellowstone Park. He talked to me a great deal about it in the fifties, and his description of it was of such a nature that it was considered to be a great exaggeration, but the development of the park in later years shows that he did not exaggerate its beauties and wonders. Bridger was evidently well acquainted with its wonderful features. Captain Chittenden, in his "The Yellowstone National Park," quotes from Gunnison's "History of the Mormons," giving Bridger's description of the park as follows: "A lake, sixty miles long, cold and pellucid, lies embosomed among high precipitous mountains. On the west side is a sloping plain, several miles wide, with clumps of trees and groves of pines. The ground resounds with the tread of horses. Geysers spout up seventy feet high, with a terrific, hissing noise, at regular intervals. Water falls are sparkling, leaping and thundering down the precipices, and collect in the pools below. The river issues from this lake, and for fifteen miles roars through the perpendicular canyon at the outlet. In this section are the 'Great Springs' so hot that meat is readily cooked in them, and, as they descend on the successive terraces, afford at length delightful baths. On the other side is an acid spring, which gushes out in a river torrent; and below is a cave, which supplies vermilion for the savages in abundance. In this admirable summary we readily discover the Yellowstone Lake, the Grand Cañon, the falls, the geyser basins, the mammoth springs and Cinnebar mountain."

Bridger talked about the Yellowstone Lake and its surroundings to everyone he met, and it was not his fault that the country was not explored and better known until in the sixties.

A small lake near the headwaters of the Yellowstone has been named Bridger Lake.

In the spring of 1831 Bridger and Sublette started for the Blackfoot country, where they met a band of the Crows who stole all their horses. Bridger led a party of this men in pursuit and recaptured all these horses as well as taking all the ponies of the Crows.

Fitzpatrick had gone to St. Louis to bring out the winter supplies. Bridger and Sublette followed nearly their previous year's route in their hunting, and in the fall reached the rendezvous on Green River, where they met Gervais and Frack, who were at the head of another party of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

After leaving St. Louis, Fitzpatrick came out with his supplies by the way of Santa Fe, and was so long in reaching the rendezvous on Green River that Sublette and Bridger returned to the Powder River to winter, and here they first met the competition of the American Fur Company, which finally drove the Rocky Mountain Fur Company out of the business. Fitzpatrick and Frack joined Bridger here on Powder River, but becoming disgusted with the movements of the American Fur Company, under Vandenburg and Dripps, Fitzpatrick and Bridger, with their entire outfit, moved west some four hundred miles to Pierre's Hole, near the forks of the Snake River. In the spring of 1832 they moved up Snake to Salt, up that stream and across to John Day River, up that river to its head, and across to Bear River in the Great Salt Lake Basin. Here they again met the American Fur Company, with Vandenburg and Dripps. They struck off into a different country, and finally rendezvoused again at Pierre's Hole, waiting for the supplies from the states being brought out by William L. Sublette. At their rendezvous concentrated this summer the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, the American Fur Company, under Vandenburg [Vanderburg] and Dripps; Arthur [Nathaniel] J. Wyeth with a new party coming mostly from the New England States, a large number of free traders and trappers and numerous bands of Indians, and here occurred the celebrated battle of Pierre's Hole, with

the Gros Ventre Indians [A Blackfoot tribe], which was one of the hardest battles fought in an early day on the plains, the losses being very heavy.

The battle of Pierre's Hole, or the Teton basin, was fought July 13, 1832. Of the different fur companies and free traders there were present some three hundred men and several hundred Indians of the Nez Perces and Flathead tribes. The Gros Ventres, about one hundred and fifty strong, always hostile to the whites, were returning from a visit to their kindred, the Arapahoes. They carried a British flag captured from Hudson Bay Company trappers.

When the Indians saw the band of trappers, who were some eight miles from the main rendezvous at Pierre's Hole, the Indians made signs of peace, but they were known to be so treacherous that no confidence was placed in their signs. However, Antoine Godin, whose father had been killed by this tribe, and a Flathead chief, whose nation had suffered untold wrongs from them, advanced to meet them. The Gros Ventre chief came forward, and when Godin grasped his hand in friendship the Flathead shot him dead. The Gros Ventres immediately retired to a grove of timber, and commenced piling up logs and entrenching. The trappers sent word to the rendezvous, and when Sublette and Campbell brought reinforcements the battle opened, the trappers charging the Indians and finally tried to burn them out, but did not succeed. The Gros Ventres, through their interpreter, made the trappers believe that a large portion of their tribe, some eight hundred, were attacking their rendezvous. Upon learning this the trappers immediately left for its defense and found the story was a lie, but by this ruse the Indians were able to escape. The whites lost five killed and six wounded. The loss of the Gros Ventres was never fully known. They left nine killed, with twenty-five horses and all their baggage, and admitted a loss of twenty-six warriors. The Indians escaped during the night and effected a junction with their tribe.

In 1832 the American Fur Company, operated by Vandenburg and Dripps, came into the territory of the Rocky

Mountain Fur Company, which was under Fitzpatrick and Bridger, and undertook to follow their parties, knowing that their trapping grounds yielded a great many furs. They followed them to the headwaters of the Missouri and down the Jefferson. Frack, Fitzpatrick and Bridger thought they would get rid of them by going right into the Blackfoot nation, which was very hostile. Finally Vandenburg and Dripps located on the Madison Fork on October 14, 1832, and near this place the Blackfeet killed Vandenburg and two of his men, and drove his party out. The Blackfeet also attacked Bridger and his party, and in his "American Fur Trade" Chittenden gives this account of the wounding of Bridger:

"One day they saw a body of Blackfeet in the open plain, though near some rocks which could be resorted to in case of need. They made pacific overtures, which were reciprocated by the whites. A few men advanced from each party, a circle was formed and the pipe of peace was smoked. It is related by Irving that while the ceremony was going on a young Mexican named Loretto, a free trapper accompanying Bridger's band, who had previously ransomed from the Crows a beautiful Blackfoot girl, and made her his wife, was then present looking on. The girl recognized her brother among the Indians. Instantly leaving her infant with Loretto she rushed into her brother's arms, and was recognized with the greatest warmth and affection.

"Bridger now rode forward to where the peace ceremonies were enacting. His rifle lay across his saddle. The Blackfoot chief came forward to meet him. Through some apparent distrust Bridger cocked his rifle as if about to fire. The chief seized the barrel and pushed it downward so that its contents were discharged into the ground. This precipitated a melee. Bridger received two arrow shots in the back, and the chief felled him to the earth with a blow from the gun, which he had wrenched from Bridger's hand. The chief then leaped into Bridger's saddle, and the whole party made for the cover of the rocks, where a desultory fire was kept up for some time. The Indian girl had been carried along with her people,

and in spite of her pitiful entreaties was not allowed to return. Loretto, witnessing her grief, seized the child and ran to her, greatly to the amazement of the Indians. He was cautioned to depart if he wanted to save his life, and at his wife's earnest insistence he did so. Some time afterwards he closed his account with the Rocky Mountain Fur Company and rejoined his wife among her own people. It is said that he was later employed as an interpreter at the fort below the falls of the Missouri.

"One of the arrowheads which Bridger received in his back on this occasion remained there for nearly three years, or until the middle of August, 1835.

"At that time Dr. Marcus Whitman was at the rendezvous on Green River en route to Oregon. Bridger was also there, and Dr. Whitman extracted the arrow from his back. The operation was a difficult one, because the arrow was hooked at the point by striking a large bone, and a cartilaginous substance had grown around it. "The doctor pursued the operation with great self-possession and perseverance, and his patient manifested equal firmness. The Indians looked on meantime with countenances indicating wonder, and in their own peculiar manner expressed great astonishment when it was extracted. The arrow was of iron and about three inches long."

In the early thirties Bridger discovered "Two Oceans Pass," the most remarkable pass, probably, in the world. It is eight thousand one hundred and fifty feet above the level of the sea. Its length is about one mile and width nearly the same. From the north a stream comes from the cañon and divides in the pass, part following to the Atlantic waters by the Yellowstone and part to the Pacific by the Snake River, the two minor streams bearing the names of Atlantic and Pacific creeks. A stream also comes from the south and makes the same divergence. Fish by these streams pass from one water to the other. Bridger used to tell the story of this river and fish passing through it, but no one believed it until in later years it was discovered to be true, and it is now one of the curiosities of Yellowstone Park.

The first great highway across the plains was no doubt

developed by Bridger, and his trappers and traders, in their travels, as the most feasible route to obtain wood, water and grass. Its avoidance of mountains and difficult streams to cross was soon made patent to them. It was known in an early day as the Overland trail, and later on as the Oregon trail. It was established by the natural formation of the country. It was first used by the wild animals, who followed the present trail very closely in their wanderings, especially the buffalo. Next came the Indians, who in their travels followed it as being the most feasible method of crossing from the Missouri River to the mountains. Following them came the trappers and hunters, then their supply trains, first by pack and later by wagons. The first wheeled vehicle known to have passed over the trail was a six pound cannon taken out by General Ashley to his posts on Utah Lake in the summer of 1826, and the first carts to pass over it were those taken out by Bonneville. Then came the immigration to Oregon, which gave the route the name of the Oregon trail. Next came the Mormons, and following them the great immigration to California from 1849 on.

In his "American Fur Trade," Captain Chittenden gives this description of the Overland trail:

"As a highway of travel the Oregon trail is the most remarkable known to history. Considering that it originated with the spontaneous use of the travelers; that no transit ever located a foot of it; that no level established its grades; that no engineer sought out the fords or built any bridges, or surveyed the mountain passes; that there was no grading to speak of, nor any attempt at metalling the roadbed, and the general good quality of this two thousand miles of highway will seem most extraordinary. Father De Smet, who was born in Belgium, the home of good roads, pronounced the Oregon trail one of the finest highways in the world. At the proper season of the year this was undoubtedly true. Before the prairies became too dry, the natural turf formed the best roadway for horses to travel on that has probably ever been known. It was amply hard to sustain traffic, yet soft enough to be easier to the feet even than the most perfect asphalt pavement.

Over such a road, winding ribbon-like through the verdant prairies amid the profusion of spring flowers, with grass so plentiful that the animals reveled on its abundance, and game everywhere greeted the hunter's rifle, and, finally, with pure water in the streams, the traveler sped his way with a feeling of joy and exhilaration. But not so when the prairies became dry and parched, the road filled with stifling dust, the stream beds mere dry ravines, or carrying only alkaline waters which could not be used, the game all gone to more hospitable sections, and the summer sun pouring down its heat with torrid intensity. It was then that the trail became a highway of desolation, strewn and abandoned property, the skeletons of horses, mules and oxen, and, alas! too often, with freshly made mounds and headboards that told the pitiful tale of sufferings too great to be endured. If the trail was the scene of romance, adventure, pleasure and excitement, so it was marked in every mile of its course by human misery, tragedy and death."

The immense travel which in later years passed over the trail carved it into a deep furrow, often with several wide parallel tracks, making a total width of a hundred feet or more. It was an astonishing spectacle even to white men when seen for the first time.

Captain Reynolds, of the Corps of Engineers, United States Army, tells a good story on himself in this connection.

In the fall of 1859 he came south from the Yellowstone River along the eastern base of the Bighorn mountains and struck the trail somewhere above the first ford of the North Platte. Before reaching it he innocently asked his guide, Bridger, if there was any danger of their crossing the trail "without seeing it." Bridger answered him only with a look of contemptuous amazement.

It may be easily imagined how great an impression the sight of this road must have made upon the minds of the Indians.

Father De Smet has recorded some interesting observations upon this point.

In 1851 he traveled in company with a large number

of Indians from the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers to Fort Laramie, where a great council was held in that year to form treaties with the several tribes. Most of these Indians had not been in that section before, and were quite unprepared for what they saw. "Our Indian companions," says Father DeSmet, "who had never seen but the narrow hunting paths by which they transport themselves and their lodges, were filled with admiration on seeing this noble highway, which is as smooth as a bare floor swept by the winds, and not a blade of grass can shoot up on it on account of the continual passing. They conceived a high idea of the 'Countless White Nation,' as they express it. They fancied that all had gone over that road, and that an immense void must exist in the land of the rising sun. Their countenances testified evident incredulity when I told them that their exit was in no wise perceived in the land of the whites. They styled the route the 'Great Medicine Road of the Whites.'"

From 1833 to 1840 Bridger conducted trapping parties in the interest of the American Fur Company through the country west of the Big Horn River, reaching to the Snake, and had many fights with and hairbreadth escapes from hostile Indians.

In 1840 he was associated with Benito Vasquez in charge of an extensive outfit, which they conducted in person until 1843, when Bridger and Vasquez built Fort Bridger, which seems to have terminated Bridger's individual trapping, and his experience as the head of trapping outfits.

In 1842 the Cheyennes and other Indians attacked the Shoshones near the site of Bridger's Fort and got away with the stock. Bridger at the head of the trappers and Snakes followed them, killing many of the Indians, and recapturing part of the stock. However, the Indians got away with several of the horses. On July 8, Mr. Preuss, of Fremont's expedition, met Bridger's party on the North Platte, near the mouth of the Medicine Bow. Writing of this meet, he says:

"July 8. Our road today was a solitary one. No game made its appearance—not even a buffalo or stray ante-

lope; and nothing occurred to break the monotony until about five o'clock, when the caravan made a sudden halt. There was a galloping in of scouts and horsemen from every side—a hurrying to and fro in noisy confusion; rifles were taken from their cover; bullet-pouches examined; in short, there was a cry of 'Indians' heard again. I had become so accustomed to these alarms that now they made but little impression on me; and before I had time to become excited the newcomers were ascertained to be whites. It was a large party of traders and trappers, conducted by Mr. Bridger, a man well known in the history of the country. As the sun was low, and there was a fine grass patch not far ahead, they turned back and encamped for the night with us.

"Mr. Bridger was invited to supper, and, after the tablecloth was removed, we listened with eager interest to an account of their adventures. What they had met we would be likely to encounter; the chances which had befallen them would likely happen to us; and we looked upon their life as a picture of our own. He informed us that the condition of the country had become exceedingly dangerous. The Sioux, who had been badly disposed, had broken out into open hostility, and in the preceding autumn his party had encountered them in a severe engagement, in which a number of lives had been lost on both sides. United with the Cheyenne and Gros Ventre Indians, they were scouring the upper country in war parties of great force, and were at this time in the neighborhood of the Red Buttes, a famous landmark, which was directly in our path. They had declared war on every living thing which should be found westward of that point, though their main object was to attack a large camp of whites and Snake Indians who had a rendezvous in the Sweetwater valley. Availing himself of his intimate knowledge of the country, he had reached Laramie by an unusual route through the Black Hills, and avoided coming in contact with any of the scattered parties.

"This gentleman offered his services to accompany us so far as the head of the Sweetwater, but in the absence

of our leader, which was deeply regretted by us all, it was impossible for us to enter upon such an arrangement."

Fort Bridger, located in latitude 41 degrees 18 minutes 12 seconds and longitude 110 degrees 18 minutes 38 seconds, is 1,070 miles west of the Missouri River by wagon road, and 886 miles by railroad. Bridger selected this spot on account of its being on the overland emigrant and Mormon trail, whether by the North or South Platte routes, as both come together at or near Bridger.

The land on which Fort Bridger is located was obtained by Bridger from the Mexican government before any of the country was ceded by Mexico to the United States. He lived there in undisputed possession until he leased the property in 1857 to the United States by formal written lease signed by Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston's quartermaster. The rental value was \$600 per year, which was never paid by the government. After thirty years the government finally paid Bridger \$6,000 for the improvements on the land, but nothing for the land. A bill is now pending in congress to pay his estate for the value of the land. The improvements were worth a great deal more money, but after the government took possession it seemed to have virtually ignored the rights of Bridger, building a military post known as Fort Bridger on the leased ground.

Bridger's fort occupied a space of perhaps two acres surrounded by a stockade. Timbers were set in the ground and elevated eight or ten feet above the surface. Inside this stockade Bridger had his residence on one side, and his trading post on the corner directly across from it. It had swinging gates in the center of the front, through which teams and cattle could be driven safe from Indians and renegade white thieves. He owned a large number of cattle, horses and mules, and his place was so situated that he enjoyed a large trade with the Mormons, gold hunters, mountaineers and Indians.

In a letter Bridger wrote to Pierre Choutau, of St. Louis, on December 10, 1843, he says: "I have established a small fort, with blacksmith shop and a supply of iron, in the road of the immigrants on Black Fork and Green

River, which promises fairly. In coming out here they are generally well supplied with money, but by the time they get here they are in need of all kinds of supplies, horses, provisions, smith-work, etc. They bring ready cash from the states, and should I receive the goods ordered will have considerable business in that way with them, and establish trade with the Indians in the neighborhood, who have a good number of beaver among them. The fort is a beautiful location on the Black Fork of Green River, receiving fine, fresh water from the snow on the Uintah range. The streams are alive with mountain trout. It passes the fork in several channels, each lined with trees, kept alive by the moisture of the soil."

It was a veritable oasis in the desert, and its selection showed good judgment on the part of the founder.

In 1856 Bridger had trouble with the Mormons. They threatened him with death and the confiscation of all his property at Fort Bridger, and he was robbed of all his stock, merchandise, and, in fact, of everything he possessed, which he claimed was worth \$100,000. The buildings at the fort were destroyed by fire, and Bridger barely escaped with his life. This brought on what was known as the Utah expedition, under Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston. Bridger piloted the army out there, taking it through by what is known as the southern route, which he had discovered, which runs by the South Platte, up the Lodge Pole, over Cheyenne Pass, by old Fort Halleck, and across the continental divide at Bridger's Pass at the head of the Muddy, follows down Bitter Creek to Green River, crosses that river, and then up Black Fork to Fort Bridger.

As the troops had made no arrangements for winter, and shelter for the stock was not to be found in the vicinity of Salt Lake, Bridger tendered to them the use of Fort Bridger and the adjoining property, which offer was accepted by Johnston, who wintered his army there. It was at this time that the government purchased from Bridger his Mexican grant of Fort Bridger, but, as heretofore mentioned, never paid him for the property, merely

agreeing to pay the rental, and claiming that Bridger's title was not perfect. This was a great injustice to Bridger. His title was one of possession. He had established here a trading post that had been of great benefit to the government and the overland immigration, and he was entitled to all he claimed. The fort was the rendezvous of all the trade and travel, of the Indians, trappers and voyagers of all that section of the country.

Concerning his claim against the government, under date of October 27, 1873, Bridger wrote to Gen. B. F. Butler, United States senator, as follows:

"... You are probably aware that I am one of the earliest and oldest explorers and trappers of the Great West now alive. Many years prior to the Mexican War, the time Fort Bridger and adjoining territories became the property of the United States, and for ten years thereafter (1857) I was in peaceful possession of my trading post, Fort Bridger, occupied it as such, and resided thereat, a fact well known to the government, as well as the public in general.

"Shortly before the so-called Utah expedition, and before the government troops under Gen. A. S. Johnston, arrived near Salt Lake City, I was robbed and threatened with death by the Mormons, by the direction of Brigham Young, of all my merchandise, stock—in fact everything I possessed, amounting to more than \$100,000 worth—the buildings in the fort practically destroyed by fire, and I barely escaped with my life.

"I was with and piloted the army under said General Johnston out there, and since the approach of winter no convenient shelter for the troops and stock could be found in the vicinity of Salt Lake, I tendered to them my so-called fort (Fort Bridger), with the adjoining shelter, affording rally for winter quarters. My offer being accepted, a written contract was entered into between myself and Captain Dickerson, of the quartermaster's Department, in behalf of the United States, approved by Gen. A. S. Johnston, and more, so signed by various officers on the general's staff such as Major Fitz-John Porter,

Doctors Madison, Mills and Bailey, Lieutenant Rich, Colonel Weigh, and others, a copy of which is now on file in the War Department at Washington. I also was furnished with a copy thereof, which was unfortunately destroyed during the war.

* * * * *

"I am now getting old and feeble and am a poor man, and consequently unable to prosecute my claim as it probably should be done. For that reason I respectfully apply to you with the desire of entrusting the matter into your hands, authorizing you, for me, to use such means as you may deem proper for the successful prosecution of this claim. I would further state that I have been strictly loyal during the late rebellion, and during the most of the time in the war in the employ of the government.

"Trusting confidently that you will do me the favor of taking the matter in hand or furnish me with your advice in the matter, I have the honor, etc."

On July 4, 1849, Bridger's second wife, a Ute, died. He had been for some time considering the movement of his family to the states, where his children could be educated, intending to devote his own time to the trading post at Fort Bridger. He went to the states in 1850, taking with him his third wife, a Snake woman, and settled upon a little farm near Little Santa Fe, Jackson County, Mo. Bridger usually spent the summers on the plains and went home winters.

In the spring of 1862, Bridger was at his home in Little Santa Fe, when the government called him onto the plains to guide the troops in the Indian campaigns. I found him there when I took command of that country in January, 1865, and placed him as guide of the Eleventh Ohio Cavalry in its march from Fort Riley to Fort Laramie. Bridger remained with them at Fort Laramie as their guide, and took part with them in the many encounters they had with the Indians, and his services to them were invaluable.

In the Indian campaign of 1865-1866, Bridger guided

General Connor's column that marched from Fort Laramie to Tongue River, and took part in the battle on Tongue River.

Capt. H. E. Palmer, Eleventh Kansas Cavalry, acting assistant adjutant general to Gen. P. E. Connor, gives this description of the Indian camp on Tongue River August 26, 1865.

"Left Piney Fork at 6:45 a. m. Traveled north over a beautiful country until about 8 a. m., when our advance reached the top of the ridge dividing the waters of the Powder from that of the Tongue River. I was riding in the extreme advance in company with Major Bridger. We were two thousand yards at least ahead of the general and his staff; our Pawnee scouts were on each flank and a little in advance; at that time there was no advance guard immediately in front. As the major and myself reached the top of the hill we voluntarily halted our steeds. I raised my field glass to my eyes and took in the grandest view that I had ever seen. I could see the north end of the Big Horn range, and away beyond the faint outline of the mountains beyond the Yellowstone. Away to the northeast the Wolf mountain range was distinctly visible. Immediately before us lay the valley of Peneau Creek, now called Prairie Dog Creek, and beyond the Little Goose, Big Goose and Tongue River valleys, and many other tributary streams. The morning was clear and bright, with not a breath of air stirring. The old major, sitting upon his horse with his eyes shaded with his hands, had been telling me for an hour or more about his Indian life—his forty years' experience on the plains, telling me how to trail Indians and distinguish the tracks of different tribes; how every spear of grass, every tree and shrub and stone was a compass to the experienced trapper and hunter—a subject that I had discussed with him nearly every day. During the winter of 1863 I had contributed to help Mrs. Bridger and the rest of the family, all of which facts the major had been acquainted with, which induced him to treat me as an old-time friend.

"As I lowered my glass the major said: 'Do you see

those ere columns of smoke over yonder?' I replied: 'Where, Major?' to which he answered: 'Over there by that ere saddle,' meaning a depression in the hills not unlike the shape of a saddle, pointing at the same time to a point nearly fifty miles away. I again raised my glasses to my eyes and took a long, earnest look, and for the life of me could not see any column of smoke, even with a strong field glass. The major was looking without any artificial help. The atmosphere seemed to be slightly hazy in the long distance like smoke, but there was no distinct columns of smoke in sight. As soon as the general and his staff arrived I called his attention to Major Bridger's discovery. The general raised his field glass and scanned the horizon closely. After a long look he remarked that there were no columns of smoke to be seen.

"The major quietly mounted his horse and rode on. I asked the general to look again as the major was very confident that he could see columns of smoke, which, of course, indicated an Indian village. The general made another examination and again asserted that there was no column of smoke. However, to satisfy curiosity and to give our guides no chance to claim that they had shown us an Indian village and we would not attack it, he suggested to Capt. Frank North, who was riding with his staff, that he go with seven of his Indians in the direction indicated to reconnoiter and report to us at Peneau Creek on Tongue River, down which we were to march. I galloped on and overtook the major, and as I came up to him overheard him remark about 'these damn paper collar soldiers telling him there was no columns of smoke.' The old man was very indignant at our doubting his ability to outsee us, with the aid of field glasses even. Just after sunset on August 27 two of the Pawnees who went out with Captain North towards Bridger's column of smoke two days previous came into camp with the information that Captain North had discovered an Indian village."

It was this village that Connor captured the next day the fight being known as the Battle of Tongue River.

In May, 1869, Captain Reynolds was assigned to the exploration of the country surrounding Yellowstone Park, and I have no doubt it was from hearing of Bridger's knowledge of that park and its surroundings that caused him to engage Bridger for his guide. Bridger was with him about a year and a half, but they failed on this trip to enter the park, being stopped by the heavy snows in the passes, but they explored and mapped the country surrounding the park.

In 1860 Ned Buntline, the great short story romance writer, hunted up Bridger at his home in Weston, and Bridger gave him enough adventures to keep him writing the balance of his life. Bridger took a liking to Buntline, and took him across the plains with him on a scouting trip. After a while Buntline returned to the East, and not long afterwards the Jim Bridger stories commenced to be published. One of these was printed every week and Bridger's companions used to save them up and read them to him. Buntline made Bridger famous, and carried him through more hairbreadth escapes than any man ever had.

Bridger's first wife was the daughter of a Flathead chief.³⁵ She died in 1846. Her children were Felix and Josephine, both of whom were sent to school at St. Louis. Felix enlisted in the spring of 1863 in Company L, Second Missouri Artillery, under General Totten. He served

35. Mrs. Virginia Bridger (Wachsman) Hahn, the only remaining child of the old scout, still living at the old place in the suburbs of Kansas City, stated in a recent interview (July, 1924) that Bridger's first wife was a white woman, a member of the Mormon faith.

"My father's first wife was not an Indian, but a Mormon woman, whom he married about the time the Mormons went West," said Mrs. Hahn, whose reminiscences of her celebrated father are fascinating and filled with great regard. "By this wife he had two sons, John and James. Constant friction arose, however, between this woman and my father over her religion; and he finally told her to choose between her Mormon religion and friends and him. She left him, after he gave her all the property held by them in common, and she then went to Salt Lake City to reside. It was soon after that that father had his worst trouble with the Mormons at Fort Bridger, which he attributed to the mischiefousness of his first wife. This wife later moved to Montana, where she and both the boys died.

throughout the Civil War, and later was with Custer in his Indian campaigns in Texas and Indian Territory. He died in 1876 on the farm near little Sante Fe, Mo., having returned there from Dallas, Texas.

Bridger's second wife was a Ute, who died July 4, 1849, at the birth of her first child, now Mrs. Virginia K. Waschman. Bridger brought this child up on buffalo's milk. When she was five years old she was sent to Robert Campbell in St. Louis, and two years later joined her sister Josephine in the convent.

When Virginia was about ten years old she obtained from Mrs. Robert Campbell a daguerreotype of her father which was taken in 1843. She colored or painted this picture, and in 1902 presented it to me, saying: "I am most sure you will be pleased with it as a gift from me, and it will remind you of the great old times that you and father had when you were out in the mountains among the wild Indians. I have often heard my father speak of you, and have wanted to see you and tell you a great many things that happened when I was a child at Fort Bridger. Before my father's death he was very anxious to see you regarding old Fort Bridger, but could not find you."

In 1850 Bridger took as his third wife a Snake woman. He bought a little farm near Santa Fe, Mo., and moved his family there from Fort Bridger that year. Mary was born in 1853. She married and now lives in the Indian

"After father's death a man presented himself to me at the little store we were keeping at Dallas, Missouri, on the edge of father's farm, claiming to be John Bridger, son of the Mormon woman; but I felt that he was an imposter. He asked to see father's picture, and I showed him one I had recently painted (and which I later presented to General Dodge). He tried in several ways to establish his relationship, but he had no credentials, and I could not acknowledge him as a half-brother.

"He asked to see my half-sister, Mary, who was the daughter of the last wife, or the Snake Indian woman; but I knew he would not be favorably received and cautioned him against the interview; but he called on her nevertheless, and when he tried to claim relationship as a half-brother, she looked him over suspiciously, took a shotgun down off the pegs, and notified him she would fill his skin with buckshot if he did not leave instantly; and I believe she would have done it, too. He left as she directed, and we never heard from him afterward. I still think he was an imposter, probably some one who had heard of my two half-brothers."

Territory. William was born in 1857, and died from consumption in 1892. In 1858 his wife died and was buried in Boone cemetery, near Waldo Station, Mo. Bridger was on the plains at the time of her death, but returned to Missouri in the spring of 1859, soon after he heard of her death, and remained on the farm until 1862. This year he rented the farm to a man named Brooks, and bought the Col. A. G. Boone house in Westport. He left his family there in charge of a Mr. London and his wife, and on the call of the government in the spring of 1862 he left for the mountains to guide the troops on the plains. He remained on the plains until late in 1869 or 1870. In the spring of 1871 he moved back to his farm near the little Santa Fe.

Of this life from this time until his death, his daughter, Mrs. Waschman, writes me the following:

"In 1873 father's health began to fail him, and his eyes were very bad, so that he could not see good, and the only way that father could distinguish any person was by the sound of their voices, but all who had the privilege of knowing him were aware of his wonderful state of health at that time, but later, in 1874, father's eyesight was leaving him very fast, and this worried him so much. He has oftentimes wished that he could see you. At times father would get very nervous, and wanted to be on the go. I had to watch after him and lead him around to please him, never still one moment.

"I got father a good old gentle horse, so that he could ride around and to have something to pass away time, so one day he named his old horse 'Ruff.' We also had a dog that went with father; he named this old, faithful dog 'Sultan.' Sometimes father would call me and say: 'I wish you would go and saddle old Ruff for me; I feel like riding around the farm,' and the faithful old dog would go along. Father could not see very well, but the old faithful horse would guide him along, but at times father would draw the lines wrong, and the horse would go wrong, and then they would get lost in the woods. The strange part of it was the old faithful dog, Sultan,

would come home and let us know that father was lost. The dog would bark and whine until I would go out and look for him, and lead him and the old horse home on the main road. Sometimes father wanted to take a walk out to the fields with old Sultan by his side, and cane in hand to guide his way out to the wheat field, would want to know how high the wheat was, and then father would go down on his knees and reach out his hands to feel for the wheat, and that was the way he passed away his time.

"Father at times wished that he could see, and only have his eyesight back again, so that he could go back out to see the mountains. I know he at times would feel lonesome, and long to see some of his old mountain friends to have a good chat of olden times away back in the fifties.

"Father often spoke of you, and would say, 'I wonder if General Dodge is alive or not; I would give anything in the world if I could see some of the old army officers once more to have a talk with them of olden times, but I know I will not be able to see any of my old-time mountain friends any more. I know that my time is near. I feel that my health is failing me very fast, and see that I am not the same man I used to be.'"

Bridger was seventy-seven years old when he died, and was buried on the Stubbins Watts farm, a mile north of Dallas, not far south of Westport. His two sons, William and Felix, were buried beside him.

On Bridger's gravestone is the following:

"James Bridger, born March 17, 1804; died July 17, 1881.
We miss thee in the circle around the fireside,
We miss thee in devotion at peaceful eventide,
The memory of your nature, so full of truth and love,
Shall lead our thoughts to seek thee among the blest above."

At the time of his death, Bridger's home was a long, two-story house, not far from where he is buried, with big chimneys at each end. It is now abandoned and dilapidated, with windows all broken. It is about one mile south of Dallas. He had 160 acres of land. No one

has lived in the house for years. The neighbors say it is haunted, and will not go near it.

One of his wives is buried in a graveyard several miles east of his grave.

I found Bridger a very companionable man. In person he was over six feet tall, spare, straight as an arrow, agile, rawboned and of powerful frame, eyes gray, hair brown and abundant even in old age, expression mild and manners agreeable. He was hospitable and generous, and was always trusted and respected. He possessed in a high degree the confidence of the Indians. He was one of the most noted hunters and trappers on the plains. Naturally shrewd, and possessing keen faculties of observation, he carefully studied the habits of all the animals, especially the beaver, and, profiting from the knowledge obtained from the Indians, with whom he chiefly associated, and with whom he became a great favorite, he soon became one of the most expert hunters and trappers in the mountains. The beaver at first abounded in every mountain stream in the country, but, at length, by being constantly pursued, they began to grow more wary and diminish in numbers, until it became necessary for trappers to extend their researches to more distant streams. Eager to gratify his curiosity, and with a natural fondness for mountain scenery, he traversed the country in every direction, sometimes accompanied by an Indian, but oftener alone. He familiarized himself with every mountain peak, every deep gorge, every hill and every landmark in the country. Having arrived upon the banks of some before undiscovered stream, and finding signs of his favorite game, he would immediately proceed to his traps, and then take his gun and wander over the hills in quest of game, the meat of which formed the only diet of the trapper at that early day. When a stream afforded game it was trapped to its source, and never left as long as beaver could be caught.

While engaged in this thorough system of trapping, no object of interest escaped his scrutiny, and when once known it was ever after remembered. He could describe with the minutest accuracy places that perhaps he had

visited but once, and that many years before, and he could travel in almost a direct line from one point to another in the greatest distances, with certainty of always making his goal. He pursued his trapping expeditions north to the British possessions, south far into New Mexico and west to the Pacific Ocean, and in this way became acquainted with all the Indian tribes in the country, and by long intercourse with them learned their languages, and became familiar with all their signs. He adopted their habits, conformed to their customs, became imbued with all their superstitions, and at length excelled them in strategy.

He was a great favorite with the Crow nation, and was at one time elected and became their chief.

Bridger was also a great Indian fighter, and I have heard two things said of him by the best plainsmen of this time; that he did not know what fear was, and that he never once lost his bearings, either on the plains or in the mountains.

In those days Bridger was rich. He was at the head of great trapping parties, and two great fur companies—the Rocky Mountain Fur Company and Northwestern Fur Company. When he became older he spent his winters in Westport, and in the summer was a scout and guide for government troops, getting ten dollars a day in gold.

Unquestionably Bridger's claims to remembrance rest upon the extraordinary part he bore in the explorations of the West. As a guide he was without an equal, and this is the testimony of every one who ever employed him. He was a born topographer; the whole West was mapped out in his mind, and such was his instinctive sense of locality and direction that it used to be said of him that he could smell his way where he could not see it. He was a complete master of plains and woodcraft, equal to any emergency, full of resources to overcome any obstacle, and I came to learn gradually how it was that for months such men could live without food except what the country afforded in that wild region. In a few hours they would put together a bull-boat and put us across any

stream. Nothing escaped their vision, the dropping of a stick or breaking of a twig, the turning of the growing grass, all brought knowledge to them, and they could tell who or what had done it. A single horse or Indian could not cross the trail but that they discovered it, and could tell how long since they passed. Their methods of hunting game were perfect, and we were never out of meat. Herbs, roots, berries, bark of trees and everything that was edible they knew. They could minister to the sick, dress wounds—in fact, in all my experience I never saw Bridger or the other voyagers of the plains and mountains meet any obstacle they could not overcome.

While Bridger was not an educated man, still any country that he had ever seen he could fully and intelligently describe, and could make a very correct estimate of the country surrounding it. He could make a map of any country he had ever traveled over, mark out its streams and mountains and the obstacles in it correctly, so that there was no trouble in following it and fully understanding it. He never claimed knowledge that he did not have of the country, or its history and surroundings, and was positive in his statements in relation to it. He was a good judge of human nature. His comments upon people that he had met and been with were always intelligent and seldom critical. He always spoke of their good parts, and was universally respected by the mountain men, and looked upon as a leader, also by all the Indians. He was careful to never give his word without fulfilling it. He understood thoroughly the Indian character, their peculiarities and superstitions. He felt very keenly any loss of confidence in him or his judgment, especially when acting as guide, and when he struck a country or trail he was not familiar with he would frankly say so, but would often say he could take our party up to the point we wanted to reach. As a guide I do not think he had his equal upon the plains.

So remarkable a man should not be lost to history and the country, and his work allowed to be forgotten, and for this reason I have compiled this sketch and raised a simple monument to his memory, reciting upon it briefly

the principal facts of his life and work. It bears this inscription:

1804—JAMES BRIDGER—1881.

Celebrated as a hunter, trapper, fur trader and guide. Discovered Great Salt Lake 1824, the South Pass 1827 [1823]. Visited Yellowstone Lake and Geysers 1830. Founded Fort Bridger 1843. Opened Overland Route by Bridger's Pass to Great Salt Lake. Was a guide for U. S. exploring expeditions, Albert Sidney Johnston's army in 1857, and G. M. Dodge in U. P. surveys and Indian campaigns 1865-66

This monument is erected as a tribute to his pioneer work by Maj. Gen. G. M. Dodge.³⁶

36. This is Bridger's only monument so far as known. There is a bronze trapper figure at the base of the Brigham Young monument in Main Street, Salt Lake City, which has been erroneously claimed to be Bridger, but the figure was not intended to represent any particular trapper. There is a pyramid of cobbles (ten feet high set in cement bearing a bronze tablet), located at Fort Bridger, Wyoming, inscribed as follows: "Fort Bridger, established as a trading post 1843. U. S. Military Post on the Oregon Trail, June 10, 1858, to October 6, 1890. This monument erected by the State of Wyoming and a few interested residents, 1914."

There are a number of Bridger postoffices and railroad stations in the West; a Bridger Creek in Montana; Bridger Lake, near the southeastern corner of Yellowstone Park; Bridger's Flat, near the Junction of Henry's Fork with the Green River, a beautiful meadow of two hundred acres where the first Ashley rendezvous was conducted in 1825; Bridger's Pass, twenty miles southwest of Rawlins; Bridger Peak, everlooking the Galatin valley, the Three Forks and Bozeman City, Montana, elevation nine thousand one hundred six feet; Bridger Trail over the Uinta Mountains between White Rocks and Manila, Utah; and Bridger creeks, mountains and other features in other parts of the west. "The Trapper" is one of four large figures painted in the dome of the Montana state capitol, the figure being that of Bridger. The likeness was made from the Bridger photograph presented in this volume, taken about 1866, but the artist dressed him in a fur cap and leather clothing. A description of the art subjects in the capitol states: "The Trapper is James Bridger, a western pioneer whose likeness also adorns the Colorado state capitol."

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